A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

Round-Table Discussion on Soviet Foreign Policy

NEW TIMES

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70th ANNIVERSARY: THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES

A rally in 1919.
Linocut by VLADIMIR KOZLINSKY

A SOVIET WEEKLY
OF WORLD AFFAIRS

NEW TIMES 44

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CONTENTS

2
Editorial
ADVANCING ALONG THE UNTRODDEN PATH

3, 10
Gennady Gerasimov. **Concerning George Shultz's visit to Moscow. GOOD PROGRESS MADE, FURTHER PROGRESS NEEDED**

4
New Times round table
OCTOBER REVOLUTION, PEACE, PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

8
In search of the future
Evgeny Velikhov. **A LABORATORY OPEN TO ALL**

11
Foreign journalists speak
Ferenc Varnai. **THE REFORM CALLS FOR A SUSTAINED EFFORT**

12
Observer's view
Alexander Pumpyansky. **ON THE BRINK**

14
Economics
Felix Goryunov. **A FAREWELL TO "BULLS"**

16
Reader's forum . Comment

With this issue we are sending you a free supplement entitled "We live in a world that has radically changed"

The editors

18
U.S.S.R.: Perestroika and democracy
Boris Pugo. **WELL BEGUN IS ONLY HALF DONE**

20
Polemics
Vladimir Buldakov. **THE REVOLUTION AND SOVIETOLOGISTS**

21
Leonid Zhegalov. **BOMBAY'S BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN**

23
China
Lev Delyusin. **THE CASE OF GUAN GUANGMEI**

24
Pages from the history of the October Revolution
"HAPPINESS, HAPPINESS FOR ALL"
Letters from Alexandra Kollontai to Tatyana Shchepkina-Kupernik

28
The October Revolution and the world
Norman Solomon. **JOHN REED DAY**

29
Around the world
Vitaly Ignatenko and Pavel Negoitsa. **SICILY: LIFE AND FICTION, HOPES AND FEARS**

Cover: **poster by Vladimir Mayakovsky**

In our lay-out we have used a detail from Kazimir Malevich's "Red Cavalry."

NEW TIMES

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FROM OUR MAILBAG

●

In December 1984 I visited my old friend in Holland, a former inmate of Sachsenhausen concentration camp, whom I had not seen for 40 years. During our conversation I asked him what he thought of the presence of U.S. missiles in Europe. "You know," he replied, "there is a saying in Holland: 'better an American missile in the garden than a Russian in the kitchen.'"

And that was said by a man who had experienced the horrors of fascism. The cold war had influenced him so much that he was unable to take a critical view of events. But recently my Dutch friend wrote to me that he had changed his mind and was now vehemently opposed to the American missiles. I think this is a result of the reforms you have started in your country. People now have greater trust in you.

KARL WILLE
Schulzendorf, G.D.R.

●

It seems to me that our only chance for survival on this fragile globe involves "conflict resolution" at all levels, personal and public and international.

Though the anti-communisdt bugaboo raises its head time after time in the United States (as, for example, the upsurge of sympathy for that man North who was given a convenient podium from which he spouted his convictions during the recent Iran-contra hearings), positive changes can be seen as well.

Today the radio told us about Santa Cruz's adoption of a "sister city" in the Ukraine. Last Sunday a group of which I'd never heard before prayed for peace. I heard by radio of some 10,000 people gathering for the prayer. This is very encouraging news.

EVA REA BORIS
Pacific Grove, U.S.A.

EDITORIAL

ADVANCING ALONG THE UNTRODDEN PATH

October 25, 1917. The proclamation of Soviet power at the Smolny in Petrograd was the culmination of a popular struggle. The goal - socialism - was clear, and at the time seemed close. But how to achieve it? "There is no vehicle, no road, absolutely nothing that had been tested beforehand," Lenin wrote.

In subsequent decades the October revolution was to exert a tremendous influence on the destinies of the world. Let us examine, however, the above-quoted philosophical view of it, condensed into a brief form.

One feels in Lenin's words the legitimate pride of a revolutionary trailblazer, and awareness of the unprecedented nature of the tasks the first proletarian state would have to tackle, and the difficulties it would encounter.

We humans are particularly sensitive to tragedy, be it the tragedy of an individual or of an idea. But who or what bears comparison with the dramatic events that accompanied the rise and consolidation of the socialist state? It has paid dearly for every step forward, every inch of historical ground it has won.

Foreign intervention and civil war, economic dislocation and terror, famine and strenuous efforts by millions to deal with economic and cultural backwardness, the economic blockade and the lack of the necessary time for survival, innocent victims and unpardonable deviations from the course charted by the October revolution - the advance along the untrodden path has indeed been difficult.

The fight against nazism - the strike force of world reaction - was also heroic and painful. And, again, the price was high indeed - 20 million lives.

"Absolutely nothing that had been tested beforehand."

The complex path traversed by the Soviet state is not merely an internal matter. It concerns world history as well, for the October revolution continues to be the principal event of the century, profoundly influencing the destinies of people living in countries far beyond the confines of the former Russian empire.

The processes of democratization and reform now taking place in the country help us understand better than ever before what Lenin meant when he said: "there can be no victorious socialism that does not practise full democracy." The very face of socialism is changing. Not only its material base but its social fabric and its energy in ending the cold war and the devision of the world into hostile alliances and camps are being renewed.

The foreign policy side of perestroika calls for the establishment of a comprehensive security system, democratic and humane interstate relations, and the recognition of peace as the most important thing in life, of coexistence as the universal principle of the international community, and of the freedom and dignity of man as the main criterion in human rights.

The reforms being carried out in the Soviet Union are extending the frontiers of glasnost, firmly establishing common sense, self-criticism and businesslike initiative as the chief instruments of the transformation of society, and eliminating arbitrary methods of leadership by mere injunction.

The identity of national and international interests is the dominant idea, the most characteristic and novel feature of the current reforms, which continue the work of the October revolution.

It was indeed the case that "absolutely nothing had been tested beforehand."

Concerning George Shultz's visit to Moscow

Good progress made, further progress needed

GENNADY GERASIMOV

The degree of success is sometimes determined not only by an actual achievement as by the extent to which it has lived up to public expectations. In other words, it is often assessed in relative rather than the absolute terms.

When little is expected, even a minor success will seem big. On the other hand, when sights are set too high, a modest success may pass unnoticed.

Assessments of the outcome of the Soviet-American talks in Moscow last week vary depending on the hopes pinned on them. The U.S. press had long been indulging in lavish speculations that the participants in the Moscow meeting would decide on the time and place of the next summit, and had even been recommending sightseeing tours of America and a visit to a ranch near Santa Barbara, California; therefore, no news from Moscow on that score came as a disappointment.

On the other hand, Moscow expected the Americans to have something new to say with regard to their stand on the observance of the ABM treaty; these expectations did not materialize and this, too, may well have been a disappointment.

This is not to say that the big "foggy bottom" team (a reference to the State Department) came to the unusually fog-bound Moscow in vain. There is no reason why we shouldn't settle for anything less than the best.

In any case, the Moscow meeting must be given credit for having dealt satisfactorily with some very serious obstacles that had arisen at the Soviet-American medium- and shorter-range missile talks in Geneva. Earlier, in Washington, the Soviet Foreign Minister and the US. Secretary of State had instructed their diplomats in Geneva to get a move on. The diplomats had not perhaps entirely succeeded in doing so, and the ministers had to step in. The Moscow talks made it possible to resolve all the basic problems relevant to the matter in hand and showed that if there is political will, there is always a way of pulling an issue out of the mire, however deeply it may be bogged down in particulars.

The effort to scrap the medium- and shorter-range missiles, which could still come up against some snags, is falling victim to its own success. As the solution of the problem draws near, arguments quieten down and debates degenerate into cantankerous grumbling.

It is reported, however, that the deployment of American missiles in Western Europe is proceeding according to previous schedles. This activity can be likened to the growth of stubble on a corpse. In any case, the Soviet side suggested a moratorium, as from November 1, on the production, testing and deployment of the doomed missiles; this move goes to demonstrate the degree to which the sides have consented to the ultimate scrapping of the missiles.

An agreement was also reached in Moscow on starting full-scale negotiations on nuclear testing.

So far so good, except that the elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles is only a modest beginning to nuclear disarmament and merely scratches the surface of oversize nuclear arsenals. Both sides believe the reduction of strategic offensive weapons to be the crucial problem. The Soviet side came up with new proposals for sub-levels, i.e., for the number of warheads to be carried by the individual elements of the "strategic triad": ICBMs, submarine-borne ballistic missiles and air-borne cruise missiles. These proposals go to meet the American side halfway and are still to be given their due in the U.S. press.

At the same time and in the context of these proposals, the Soviet side is suggesting keeping the ABM treaty in force for at least a decade. Incidentally, George Shultz admitted at a Moscow press conference on October 23 that both sides approved of the principle of non-withdrawal from ABM and were adhering to this approach. Consequently, any differences that arise are on how to preserve the principle agreed upon. The

(to be continued on page 10)

Mikhail Gorbachev and George Shultz meet.

Photo by S. Smirnov

NEW TIMES ROUND TABLE

OCTOBER REVOLUTION, PEACE, PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

The editors have invited scholars in international affairs and journalists to discuss the subject. The scholars in the discussion are Valentin Berezhkov, Alexander Galkin and Vyacheslav Dashichev, and the journalists - Izvestia's political observer Alexander Bovin, veteran Soviet journalist Semyon Rostovsky, known to readers by his pen name of Ernst Henry. New Times was represented by Lev Bezymensky and Konstantin Isakov.

N.T.: The seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution is also the seventieth anniversary of Soviet foreign policy. One of the two basic acts of the new-born Soviet republic was the Decree on Peace. In the words of Georgy Chicherin, the Republic created not only a new system of domestic policy, but a new system of foreign policy too. This seems an opportune moment to look at the novel features of this policy both historically and in terms of the present time. This we now propose to do. How were these new elements born? How did the Soviet State arrive at the concept of peaceful coexistence and make it its basic premise?

A. Bovin: From the outset, I would like to say something that I think we should bear in mind in this discussion. It is a popular and simplistic misconception that at the time of the October Revolution Lenin had a ready-made theory of peaceful coexistence, and that all that remained to be done was to apply it in the conditions formed after the October Revolution. This bears no relation to how Lenin's ideas really evolved. In fact, it calls into question the very concept of peaceful coexistence.

At the time of the October Revolution Lenin and the Bolshevik Party clearly expected the Russian revolution to detonate a worldwide revolution. At that time this was the only possibility envisaged by Lenin. This is borne out not by isolated utterances but by the whole logic and totality of his pronouncements in that period. It was only the development of events, the failure of the revolution to occur in the West and the new situation in which the young Soviet republic found itself isolated - it was only this that made our Party take a different look at things.

The famous formula - "Russia achieved Marxism through agony" - applies even more to peaceful coexistence. Our Party and our country arrived at the theory and practice of peaceful coexistence through internal contradictions, through the struggle against the interventionists and the struggle within the Party. The Brest Peace Treaty caused great controversy in the Party. Lenin upheld a point of view which was in effect the principle of peaceful coexistence. He secured its adoption by a majority of one or two votes, and at one point even threatened to resign. The whole idea hung in the balance. As many times before, Lenin displayed his genius as a politician and theorist who was not afraid to swim against the current. He defended his position, which provided a practical and theoretical basis for the concept of peaceful coexistence.

A. Galkin: Why are we so interested in history? History is to the social scientist what experiment is to the natural scientist.

Bearing this in mind I think it is interesting to trace the evolution or I would even say revolution of Lenin's views. This development shows Lenin's ability to grasp the changes in the situation, and draw the necessary political and theoretical conclusions without delay, I stress, without delay. I think many of our failures and misfortunes in the past have been due to our delayed reaction to changing situations.

Lenin steered clear of that danger, but this was no easy thing to do. In fact, the whole system of revolutionary values had to be reassessed. Did we carry out the revolution only to find ourselves embracing the imperialists?

N.T. (to Semyon Rostovsky): You belong to the first revolutionary generation. How would you have reacted to a speaker referring to "peaceful coexistence" with capitalism back in those days?

S. Rostovsky: I would have regarded him with extreme suspicion.

A. Galkin: Lenin showed political courage in seeing that the situation had changed drastically and that there was a new objective reality. As Chicherin was later to write: "Reality confronted us and other states with the need to establish long-term relations." The term "peaceful coexistence" made its appearance.

N.T.: So it can be said that as soon as it emerged on the world scene, Soviet foreign policy not only proclaimed peace, but proposed a new concept of international relations, the concept of peaceful coexistence (the notion was new for us too).

A. Bovin: In its nature and intent, this concept is not particularly "socialist." Peaceful coexistence means the non-use of force against other states, and respect for their integrity and sovereignty. We find this set of principles in the French Revolution. But these were formal principles. It was only when socialism came to power that it began to formulate the principles of its relations with the capitalists and to translate these formal principles into political practice. In this way Soviet foreign policy made it possible for peaceful coexistence subsequently to be adopted as a universal norm.

V. Berezhkov: I would like to add that Lenin's ideas about economic cooperation between the two systems, "two property systems," as he put it, went a long way towards promoting the concept of peaceful coexistence and the possibility of the socialist Soviet Union living side by side with the capitalist world for a prolonged period. I think this is of more than merely academic importance. It is interesting to look at the practical measures taken at the time.

The Brest Peace Treaty has been mentioned here. Indeed, this peace treaty marked a turning point in the young Soviet Republic's approach to international affairs. I would like to mention another peace treaty which is seldom referred to today, although its history is equally instructive. This is the Riga Treaty of 1921 which concluded the Soviet-Polish war. After all, it was a peace treaty with a capitalist Poland that had attacked Russia and the Ukraine. When the war ended, with a grave defeat for us, Lenin had to fight an uphill struggle to secure the peace treaty. It was a crippling peace because it gave away Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, but nevertheless it stabilized the situation and made it possible to concentrate effots on repelling the main enemy, General Wrangel. At the same time the events of those years remind us that the Bolshevik Party had frankly admitted that it had made a mistake in expecting the Red Army to bring revolution to Poland.

A. Galkin: But let us not forget that the Polish capitalists were not alone. Poland was an important anti-Soviet bridgehead for the Entente.

S. Rostovsky: Let us not forget General Weygand and his military mission in Poland.

V. Dashichev: Still, it is appropriate to recall Lenin's wise words that you cannot give revolution "a push." It only takes place where the objective internal conditions for it are ripe. The "pushing" theory, he said at the time of the Brest Peace Treaty, is completely at variance with Marxism.

N.T.: Aren't we waging a kind of rearguard action? We are talking about the events of long ago, the idealism and mistakes of the revolution...

Dashichev: Not in the least. Let me tell you about an episode from the time when I was teaching in the F.R.G. It happened in Hanover. I got off the train and as I was walking through the railway station, I saw a huge poster with a quotation from Lenin. The quotation went something like this: Yes, we shall seek to create peaceful conditions, seek peace with capitalists, and trade with them, but we shall use the money from this trade to build weapons, and we shall turn these weapons against world capitalism. I wondered where the quotation came from. Somebody later told me that this was a "quotation" Goebbels had attributed to Lenin. But belief that he said it is still current today.

So the problem is still relevant. It is often suggested in the West that peaceful coexistence is only a screen, a cover under which the Soviet leadership pursues a policy of expansion and seeks to extend its sphere of influence. Such claims ignore the actual development of Soviet foreign policy. It would be useful therefore to review the milestones in the development of this policy.

As head of the Soviet state, Lenin, together with the "first generation" of diplomats, sought to ensure conditions in which the achievements of the October Revolution could be preserved, and the new society pass on to reconstruction. Not many remember today that the Soviet armed forces numbered 560,000 men at the end of the civil war and the intervention. This level - which would today be described as a level of reasonable sufficiency - remained until 1931. Subsequently, the growing danger of war forced us to step up our defences. The U.S.S.R.'s foreign policy in that period is an example of active and successful work to ensure conditions for peaceful construction. Such leaders as Chicherin, Litvinov, Vorovsky, Krasin, and many others contributed greatly towards that end.

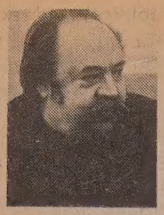
A. Galkin: I think the picture would be incomplete if we failed to mention another circumstance. When we refute the allegation that the Soviet Union seeks to interfere in external events by armed force we are adopting the rules of another's game. The main impact of the October Revolution on world development was ideological: it played a tremendous revolutionizing role in the colonial world in particular. The capitalist world's main fear at the time was not, as it is claimed, fear of a Red armed invasion. If we look at Western documents, beginning with the notorious Curzon Ultimatum, the charge against us was not that we were sending our troops, but that we were propagating communism. The biggest bogey for the West at the time was the Comintern Radio station broadcasting from Moscow...

V. Berezhkov: Take the 1933 agreement on the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States. The U.S. demanded explicitly that we stop all propaganda and interference in U.S. affairs. We had to give such assurances, although we had never intended to interfere in U.S. affairs...

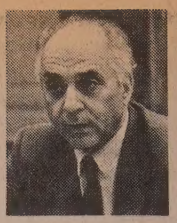
N.T.: Let us go back to the 1917 Decree

THE THEME OF REVOLUTION IN ART

Fyodor Buhgolts. The Revolution. A sketch for a fragment of the festive decoration of Bolshoi Prospekt, Vasilyevsky Island, Petrograd. 1918.



ALEXANDER BOVIN:
Let's look back to the early beginnings



ALEXANDER GALKIN:
Why are we interested in history?

VALENTIN BEREZHKOV:
We never intended to interfere in U.S. affairs

on Peace. The standard accusation against us is that peaceful coexistence and our concept of peace are declarative. But was the Decree on Peace a mere declaration?

A. Bovin: Certainly, the Decree on Peace was addressed to the peoples of the belligerent nations. Lenin was probably aware that the representatives of the two sides would not sit down with the Soviet Union to negotiate peace. I don't think this was Lenin's main intention. As a realistic political leader, he knew what great revolutionizing potential the peace slogan had. He realized that peace was a universal demand.

On the other hand, the Soviet republic was not speaking into a void. It was addressing governments. One provision in the Decree said that the proposal of peace was not an ultimatum, that it could be the subject of discussion and that various proposals could be considered. This amounted to a specific recommendation to the emerging new diplomacy and to present-day diplomats.

N.T.: We are talking about the first period in the evolution of the concept of peaceful coexistence - its birth and its application between world wars. At that time the West rejected it. Moreover, German imperialism made an attempt to liquidate the world's first socialist state. The war demonstrated, however, that no force was capable of bringing down the new socialist system. A lesson for all times.

V. Berezhkov: But there was another important lesson to be drawn from the war: states belonging to two different systems could coexist within the framework of an anti-Hitler coalition. It was not easy, but for all that it happened.

N.T.: We are not forgetting this. Indeed, the problem of coexistence acquired a new dimension in the postwar period. The 27th CPSU Congress put forward a new vision of the world, a new philosophy of the present and the future. The revolutionary changes launched in Soviet society are socialism's fresh invitation to peaceful competition. This lends importance to the birth and development of the new political thinking we are witnessing. What is the essence of this process?

A. Bovin: It's a totally new concept. Assessing the realities of the nuclear era, Soviet foreign policy thinking came to the realization that a nuclear war would destroy not individuals, but the whole human race. Hence the precedence of universal human interests. This is not just a new approach, it is a whole new concept. It combines a new and broader sociological view with a new approach to specific foreign political affairs.

A. Galkin: The concept of new political thinking brings together many elements, some of which are not of recent growth. Einstein spoke of the need for new thinking back in 1945. His appeal was not heard by everyone, and it was some time before its message was clear to us. But the Marxist dialectical conception of the world gave our Party the key to developing the new thinking, which has now become part of government policy. This is a new development.

There is nothing wrong with the fact that the Soviet leadership has drawn on some ideas expressed in the West. In fact it is one of the strengths of the new concept. For it should be acceptable to both systems. At the same time it expresses the class interests of socialism, which has proclaimed peace to be the most valuable asset.

A. Bovin: the basic reality underlying the new thinking is the recognition of the fact that humanity is technically equipped to destroy itself. This provides the starting premise and the material basis for the formulation of a new foreign policy conception.

A. Galkin: I would like to suggest a slight correction. Awareness that mankind is capable of destroying itself is not so much a starting premise as a stimulus to understanding the fundamental unity of mankind. For many years we have tended to leave out of consideration the problem of the unity of the human race. Universal human problems were frowned upon as something prompted by abstract humanist ideas. This prevented us from seeing a complete picture of global development and understanding the realities of the present day. Now we are revising our priorities, and they determine our thinking on foreign policy.

N.T.: The concept of new political thinking should include an operational side.

V. Dashichev: I was just about to speak about the operational aspect. Indeed, what specific difference does new thinking make to foreign policy?

The first question to be addressed is the relationship between politics and war. If we want to prevent war and preserve peace, we have to come to grips with this basic problem. Clausewitz's famous formula reads that war is simply a continuation of policy by other means. There seems to be general agreement that his thesis is inapplicable in the nuclear age. And yet it seems to me that it is being used out of inertia when the resolution of military questions is given precedence over political ones.

We should ask ourselves: what is the primary source of differences between the East and the West? The arms race or contradictions in other areas - political and ideological? Disarmament is of course a stimulus to resolving political contradictions, and yet the arms race is a continuation of politics by other means. We want to eliminate the military consequences of political contradictions, but the root of the problem is to resolve the political and ideological contradictions.

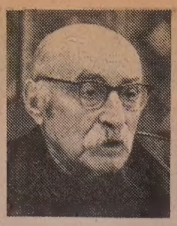
A. Bovin: I don't altogether agree with that. If the existing political contradictions cannot be resolved by military means, we can and must abolish military means. Wouldn't this pave the way for the solution of political problems?

V. Dashichev: This is only part of the issue. I think the solution of problems of disarmament lies in the solution of political contradictions. We have to discern these contradictions in the world, and see the balance of forces in Europe and the global balance. I think we tend to forget a very interesting idea which Lenin expressed in 1920. I quote: "Every people lives in a state, and every state belongs to a system of states, which are in a certain system of political equilibrium in relation to one another."

When this equilibrium is upset there is growing danger of war and tensions. The West has more than once tried to upset the equilibrium. But we too have something to think about. Speaking before Soviet diplomats, Comrade Shevardnadze noted that we have often "committed huge material investment to hopeless foreign political projects." What have been the consequences of such "expenditure-oriented" diplomacy? Feeling that it had to answer "the Soviet challenge," the West of course could no longer resort to military means. The only remaining means at its disposal was military-economic pressure. This gives a new twist to the relationship between war and politics in the nuclear age.

A. Galkin: Today it is not enough to speak of new political thinking - we should

VYACHESLAV DASHICHEV: A foreign policy adjustment mechanism needed



SEMYON ROSTOVSKY: I believe in the triumph of new thinking

speak of new political practice. Soviet foreign policy has embarked on this course. It has come up with milestone initiatives: the programme for a nuclear-free world, the idea of a comprehensive system of international security, the programme for the Asian Pacific region, for the North, "the global double zero," and the new ideas for the United Nations. Let's face it, our partners have not come up with similar practical steps. Certainly not on the same scale. But there are important shifts. It looks as if a very important agreement will soon be signed to eliminate two whole classes of nuclear missile.

S. Rostovsky: I should like to warn against euphoria: the enemies of détente and disarmament will continue to be active even after such an agreement has been signed.

A. Galkin: There's no question of euphoria. But consider the following question. For millenia mankind has resolved its foreign political problems - when they reached a certain pitch - by military means. The balance of forces was measured through direct confrontation, and then equilibrium was restored at a new level. This is impossible in the nuclear era. But contradictions exist, and accumulate, and they have to be resolved, and we have yet to devise a mechanism for resolving them. This suggests that the transition to the new thinking will be long and painful. It has to be stimulated and advanced. This assigns an important role to the initiatives of socialist diplomacy and the whole socialist community.

Let us be self-critical. In the past we have often used our fingers to assess the intentions of the other side. We must use computers. In other words, we must bring in science and public opinion. Of course diplomatic negotiations are sometimes conducted behind closed doors. But the discussion of problems and exchange of opinions should be open. Then we can claim that we are practising the open diplomacy advocated by Lenin.

A. Bovin: We must go back to these principles.

A. Galkin: Indeed, we have to ask ourselves, what does "open diplomacy" mean to us in real terms? We are all aware that some procedures cannot be public in character. But the open discussion of foreign policy problems must gradually become the rule.

N.T.: We should probably begin by involving our scientific community. In 1923 Georgy Chicherin wrote that the "novelty of Soviet foreign policy lies in the fact that it proceeds from a Marxist analysis of historical processes, and therefore looks for the basic underlying trends in the development of political and economic relations today." There is a lot of wisdom in this formula. But how often is it practised?

A. Bovin: If we pick up the newspapers Izvestia and Pravda for 1918-24, we find that their analytical articles are by no means inferior and often superior to those of today. And they are much more informative. As part of our perestroika, it would be a good idea to try to restore our former standard.

V. Dashichev: The important thing is not the mere presence of glasnost, but its results, and the practical use of the results of public discussion. I mean the mechanism for adjusting foreign policy, which has been absent and is still absent. We certainly should have a mechanism to reflect the opinion of the scientific community and the public at large. I see no reason why the Foreign Affairs Commissions in both chambers of the Supreme Soviet should not be made permanent. They are in a position to enlist the services of experts, scientists, and practical workers. This would be of real help to the Foreign Affairs Ministry, whose head has expressed regret that while domestic policy issues are being frankly discussed, this is not the case with foreign policy issues...

N.T.: Doesn't it seem to you that a certain mechanism for adjusting foreign policy has already emerged? At the official level, there are regular meetings of government leaders and at non-government level, there are numerous discussions, symposia and meetings, especially as part of the anti-war movement. But this apparently is not enough.

A. Bovin: As for us journalists, we can contribute something ourselves. New Times could arrange regular and open debate on foreign policy issues where we could talk and argue as we are doing today.

N.T.: We accept your proposal. As new initiatives and new concepts emerge, we need to understand, specify and perhaps enlarge on them. There is a constant need for "public control" over the process of nuclear disarmament. The relationship between new thinking and social progress in developing countries requires further study. There are questions galore.

To conclude our talk, I would like to hear from our "elder," the man who predicted the course of the second world war in 1930. How does he see the perspective for the 1980s?

S. Rostovsky: I feel that new thinking has a chance. It may become a reality. Not at once, not everywhere and not easily, but it may prevail. This is what historical perspective is for. ■

№ 208.
Пятница,
27 октября 1917 г.

ИЗВѢСТІЯ

ЦѢНА:
въ Петроградѣ 15 коп.
на ст. жел. д. 18 коп.

Центральнаго Исполнительнаго Комитета
и Петроградскаго совѣта
РАБОЧИХЪ и СОЛДАТСКИХЪ ДЕПУТАТОВЪ.

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A LABORATORY OPEN TO ALL

The term "universal laboratory" sounds like something from the realm of science fiction. But such a laboratory does exist, and it functions effectively. What kind of laboratory is it and what tasks does it undertake?

A New Times correspondent interviewed Vice-President of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences EVGENY VELIKHOV.

How would you define the laboratory? Is it an international political organization of scientists or is it an interstate scientific amalgamation?

It would be better to put it this way: the Universal Laboratory is an international scientific organization which, on the basis of one or several countries, organizes and conducts research of interest to all of humanity.

In other words, it is a prototype of a world scientific organization of the kind science fiction writers describe?

Quite.

When and to what end was the organization founded?

The idea was advanced by the Italian physicist Antonio Zichichi. Initially the laboratory consisted exclusively of Italian scientists and dealt with projects for the development of Third World countries. Then China and, somewhat later, the United States, joined in the research. The Soviet branch of the Universal Laboratory in Moscow was inaugurated by the U.S.S.R. Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti at the time of the international forum "For a Nuclear-Free World, for the Survival of Mankind" last February.

The very idea of the laboratory is associated with the problem of science, whose achievements should be available to all. Militarization is now affecting not only politics and economics, but also scientific research. Science in major countries has been militarized to a considerable extent and is engaged in military projects. As a result, vast material and intellectual resources are effectively squandered, while weapons of mass destruction invented by the human mind are becoming increasingly horrible and dangerous.

There is a further tendency that is damaging to science as an area of intellectual activity. It is the secrecy engendered by militarization. The pall of secrecy, restrictions on information and know-how, attempts to isolate from the mainstream of scientific endeavour scientists of a country viewed as a potential enemy (as U.S. leaders are trying to do to Soviet scientists) are deleterious to world science, which is by nature international.

We scientists are not going to tolerate this. The movement against the militarization of research is assuming ever clearer outlines.

Would it be right to declassify all the research projects at a time that is still unstable?

No, it isn't. Still, we could start with a sector involving research that is not secret, and establish a high degree of international cooperation and ensure high standards. Considerable experience has already accumulated here. Take, for instance, research in high-energy physics. Our theoreticians and scientists work jointly with American scientists, using accelerators from the U.S. On the other hand, the Americans have been conducting research into thermonuclear fusion in our plants for over 30 years. As you see, there are a number of areas where cooperation has already been established. And this sector should now be expanded. The Universal Laboratory is one possible way of doing this.

What research projects by foreign scientists impressed you the most?

It is difficult to pinpoint them. Still, I would like to mention the project for food preservation being developed by Italy and China, the project for weather forecasting and flood warnings and for the Yellow River in China, and research into solar energy.... Very interesting work is being conducted to create a "model settlement" with a closed energy utilization circuit. This is also an Italo-Chinese project. I would also like to commend the project for earthquake prediction on which scientists of several countries are working. Its results will be of considerable interest to us, to Italy, to the U.S. and many other countries where there are areas of high seismic activity.

And what contribution has been made by Soviet scientists?

Soviet scientists have suggested a number of projects and programmes, for instance, the Archimedes project for the comprehensive study of the globe, its surface, crust, atmosphere, and oceans with the use of seismic and electromagnetic probing. A comprehensive study of this kind has long been needed. It will make it possible not only to understand the mechanisms of a number of physical processes from deep within the earth to the limit of the atmosphere, but also to forecast changes taking place in them.

Then there is the Hermes project. It is essentially concerned with the introduction of new thinking in education. We are proceeding from the view that scientists the world over understand each other perfectly. Why not then share this experience with children? They should be enabled to use the achievements of modern science, and given access to the knowledge and cultural, aesthetic and moral values of all nations. What this adds up to is the creation of a new global culture.

I believe this would help develop in the young generation a global awareness of its responsibility to the world in which we live.

Have any specific steps already been taken towards this end?

We are working out new methods of school tuition with the use of the most up-to-date computers and the latest achievements in science, and more specifically, an international computer circuit.

Last summer we set up a camp in the ancient city of Pereslavl-Zalessky near Moscow. As well as Soviet schoolchildren, their coevals from the U.S. and Italy stayed in the camp. A direct computer linked Pereslavl-Zalessky live with several localities in California. By means of computers, children were able to communicate with each other freely. Within a month they had got acquainted and made friends. Schoolchildren from the Italian city of Bologna have now joined in the experiment. We are discussing the possibility of similar link-up with India, and we visualize a global computer circuit.

And what are the practical implications of this?

Imagine that such a circuit has already been formed, and pupils in all our schools have access to it. A geography lesson is in progress on India's physical geography. So young Muscovites can contact their

coevals in Delhi or Bangalore and get additional information, while pupils in Leningrad could give consultations in Russian spelling to their friends in Australia. The computer system has virtually unlimited possibilities. An electronic newspaper could be issued and Olympiads in various subjects could be held. And everybody wishing to take part in them could do so no matter where he or she was based at a given moment.

But such a circuit would appear to be a thing of the remote future!

Not as remote as it might seem, although its creation is certainly impossible without the development of computer techniques and means of space communication. This would naturally require the necessary political conditions and vast expenditures which no country could afford on its own....

Will this communication not turn lively children into assiduous computer appendages! However tempting it might be to chat with a friend in Argentina, then to copy a home assignment from a pal in Mongolia, this is no replacement for one-to-one communication, games and pranks....

This is why we decided against an experiment in a laboratory and set up an international camp. Soviet, Italian and American schoolchildren spent free time, worked and studied together. As I have said, Pereslavl-Zalessky is one of the most ancient Russian cities. Man is known to have lived in the area 70,000 years ago. There are many architectural and cultural monuments in the city. The children placed signs and indicators, with reference material for tourists. But that should have been done by the local authorities....

Mikhail Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan, and the heads of many other states have welcomed the creation of the Universal Laboratory. Is there reason for saying that the scientific sector, whose results can be used by all, will continue to expand!

Yes, there is, though one should not lose sight of the fact that, alongside military secrecy and political restictions, there are commercial obstacles. In the United States and in many other capitalist and developing countries, research facilities belong to privately-owned firms that watchfully guard their monopoly over the research findings. This is part of the reason why the participation of American scientists in the Universal Laboratory projects is below their potential.

Not a single discovery or invention made in the framework of research conducted by this organization is the property of any single country. All countries have an equal right to use them free of charge. This is a totally new approach to the use of discoveries. It is finding increasing numbers of supporters, as it will be most effective in helping create equal opportunities for the development of all nations.

And in this lies the fundamental difference between the Universal Laboratory and the forms of international scientific cooperation with which we are already familiar!

Precisely. Bilateral ties are among the most widespread forms of scientific ties. Multilateral programmes are less numerous. Certainly, specialists hold regular congresses and symposia, where they exchange information and share plans. The press gives considerable assistance to expanding international scientific exchanges, but this is no longer enough. This is why such high hopes are being pinned on the ability of the Universal Laboratory to make science international.

Another characteristic feature of the laboratory is that, unlike other international organizations, it does not have a large managerial staff. The centre of the Universal Laboratory at Erice, Italy, employs several officials whose main task is to enable research centres and individual scientists working on various projects to keep in touch.

What about the managerial apparatus at the Soviet branch!

So far it only employs one person, an accountant. Its staff will certainly be increased with time, but it will not be large. We plan to set up a small centre in Moscow, and a larger one in Pereslavl-Zalessky. We wish to use the Fyodorovsky Monastery as its premises. Italian architects have agreed to help restore the monastery and arrange the centre.

I consider it wasteful to restore monasteries and churches in order to leave them vacant or use them as camping sites for tourists. They could be used for better purposes: scientific, cultural, aesthetic. Incidentally, the Archimedes project includes the Terra programme, which provides for the restoration of scenic landscapes and historical monuments of greater artistic value all over the world.

And one last question. How are the programmes in the framework of the Universal Laboratory adopted and financed!

The Universal Laboratory has no budget of its own. Each of the projects is financed by the interested party or parties, by those who conduct the research. The decisions on research under new programmes are considered by panels of experts to which leading specialists, scientists of world renown, are invited. The leadership of the Universal Laboratory then endorses or rejects the plans for new research. One or, more often, two coordinators are appointed for each project. The research is conducted on the basis of participating countries, but the results of the reseach can be used by every country.

Interviewer EVGENY ANDRIANOV

Soviet and American scientists discussing a programme of joint experiments in plasma physics at the Nuclear Physics Institute of the Siberian Branch of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences.

TASS photo

sides differ, for instance, on the period of non-withdrawal and its initial date.

If only Shultz had proved right...In fact, however, the ABM treaty was an obstacle to carrying out the American "star wars" programmes. For the advocates of the President's strategtic defence initiative (SDI) this treaty is an eyesore to be got rid of, a nuisance. To the complete astonishment of diplomats and lawyers, the so-called "broad interpretation" of the treaty emerged, allowing for enough loopholes to call its validity in question.

In his book, "Deadly Gambits," published in 1984, the American journalist Strobe Talbott, who has been following the Soviet-American talks for years, pointed out that the Reagan administration has always sought to withdraw from the ABM treaty. The above-mentioned "broad interpretation" of the treaty is a means towards this end.

Ironically, it was U.S. diplomats who argued in the talks with Soviet officials in the 1960s that excessive emphasis on anti--missile defence leads not to defence but to an intensified nuclear arms race, as it compels the other side to build up its offensive armaments in order to counteract the new defensive weapons. As a result, the ABM treaty was concluded in 1972. But today the Americans are rehashing the same primitive logic they abandoned in the 1960s, alleging that "defence has always been a good thing."

Heated debates are in progress in the United States over the "star wars" programme, and a special organization, the National Campaign to Save the ABM Treaty, has even been set up. Its director David Riley, and Gerard Smith, former head of the U.S. delegation at the talks on anti-missile defence, recently wrote in The New York Times:

"Both nations stand on the brink of the greatest breakthrough in curbing the arms race since the nuclear age began. But this bright promise could be sacrificed to President Reagan's misguided commitment to the 'star wars' crash programme."

Washington is now insisting that it will never and under no circumstances make SDI a subject of negotiations. But that is not the question at issue. The aim is to preserve stability in the process of nuclear disarmament. Moscow has advanced proposals, and Washington has refused to consider them.

The United States is proposing cuts in offensive armaments, while leaving defensive armaments aside. But at the above-mentioned press conference in Moscow, Shultz spoke of the interconnection between these armaments, noting with reference to the ABM treaty, that limits on the ABM systems should be effected in the event of cuts in strategic offensive armaments. The Secretary of State then pointed out that since the signing of the ABM treaty in 1972 the number of offensive armaments had increased four-fold, and he concluded therefore that cuts in strategic armaments were in keeping with the aim of observing the ABM treaty.

That is true, of course, according to the principle: "less for attack, less for defence." It may be asked, however, why the United States has refused to observe the strategic arms limits envisaged in the SALT-2 treaty, in line with the principle "more for attack," and intends to build the national ABM system according to the principle "more for defence," realizing that this will compel the other side to return to the principle "more for attack."

As George Shultz aptly noted with regard to the ABM treaty, cuts in offensive armaments should be effected simultaneously with limits on ABM systems. If ABM systems are not limited, then, following the same logic, cuts in offensive armaments should be renounced too. The connection is objective, and was confirmed by Shultz, though he used it in order to make us agree to cuts in strategic armaments, disregarding the fate of the ABM treaty.

Is a compromise possible? I see such a compromise in Shultz's agreement with the statement that "the principle of non-withdrawal from the ABM treaty is a good principle." Time will show whether a solution can be found.

As for the future of the SDI programme, I would like to cite here the conclusion drawn by John Tirman, editor of a collection of articles put out by the Union of Concerned Scientists and entitled "Empty Promise: the Growing Case against Star Wars." "A future administration," he writes, "will perhaps give star wars the unceremonious burial it deserves. Whether that is done before the star wars bureaucracy has made its mischief is not yet clear. The weak links of the concept and programme will eventually break, but will the victim be the American people?"

The solution of this problem should not be left to the next administration.

■

For want of arguments

That the prospect of a treaty abolishing two classes of nuclear missiles would be distasteful to some people could have been guessed long ago. And the more likely this prospect becomes, the more difficult is the situation of politicians and propagandists opposed to such a treaty.

Where to find arguments? This objective difficulty evidently impels some people to return to primitive methods. True, it is believed today in the Federal Republic of Germany that the age of primitive anti-communism is past. But we take issue with this for two reasons. First, anti-communism, be it primitive or sophisticated, remains dangerous and potentially disastrous. Second, relapses into the most primitive anti-communism do intermittently occur.

This happened recently to Prof. Michael Stürmer, a well--known scientist and leader of the West German neo-conservatives. It cannot be said that Stürmer is a man from the Stone Age. Frankfurter Allgemeine, in its turn, claims to possess a high intellectual standard. But here is how Prof. Stürmer explains the dangers of a future Soviet-American agreement in the pages of this newspaper:

"The abolition of nuclear weapons in Western Europe, particularly in the Federal Republic, remains one of the Soviet Union's goals. Simultaneously, the Soviet Union wants to retain its capacity for invasion by conventional armed forces."

This sounds ominous. But, in fact, it is a sheer primitivism. Judge for yourselves.

How can he allege that the Soviet Union is seeking to abolish nuclear weapons only in Western Europe and the Federal Republic? This is quite simply untrue. The Soviet programme envisages the abolition of nuclear weapons of various classes on both sides of the dividing line. Its principle is equal security. This is a basic principle of the Soviet-American and other talks. Prof. Stürmer cannot but know that under the proposed agreement the Soviet Union is to scrap far more warheads than the United States. He knows, but....

How can the myth of "Soviet invasion by conventional forces" be repeated continually? It was the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty states which, over a year ago, proposed substantial cuts in conventional forces. Prof. Stürmer probably knows, too, about the Berlin declaration of the socialist countries, which speaks of the defensive military doctrine of the Warsaw Treaty states. But....

Michael Stürmer concludes his argument in this way: the "vulnerability" of Europe depends not only on the nuclear powers but also on the wisdom of the Europeans. Well, there is no denying that. But a reasonble decision can be made on the basis of a reasonable assessment. And how can Europe become invulnerable when deliberately falsified, primitive anti-communist judgements are palmed off on its peoples?

ALEXANDER KOSENKO

The reform calls for a sustained effort

FERENC VARNAI

Only a few years ago we in Hungary at times wondered if our reforms had isolated us from the other socialist countries. Now the question has to be formulated differently: are we in danger of lagging behind? For today many of the socialist countries are taking steps to alter their economic mechanism, and improve their political, ideological and cultural institutions.

"The process of renovation, a far from easy one, which is now taking place in the socialist world, is of historic significance," said Janos Kadar in his speech to the country's National Assembly at the end of September. "For a number of reasons the process is taking different forms in the Soviet Union and in other European socialist countries. We welcome this process. There was a time when because of our reform it was thought that we were applying capitalist methods. But today we no longer stand alone in putting through these much needed innovations. The changes in Hungary are part of the general process of renovation that is so important not only for the socialist system, but for the whole of humanity."

The pace of the reforms,naturally, differs from country to country. It depends on each country's needs and potential, as well as on the stand taken by its leadership and its specific national features. The fact that more and more socialist countries believe changes to be essential can be explained by the serious difficulties that have arisen. Socialism as a social system should provide the working people with better social conditions and a higher standard of living. That kind of progress would make socialism much more attractive. We must ensure better organization of work and production, and make every working man and woman feel that he or she is the real master of his or her factory, and of the country. In other words, at a time when momentous historic changes are taking place worldwide, we must do more than just to resolve whatever day-to-day problems face us. Our aim is to make socialism more effective, and ensure its better functioning.

The efforts that are being made to resolve these problems are drawing the socialist countries closer together, and making them more interested in and eager for close cooperation (and this remains true even when urgent problems compel one country or other to fall out of step). That is why each country will look to the experience of the others and compare it with its own. It will also compare the causes, character and direction of the reforms under way, as well as different approaches to domestic and economic policy, and culture. This is being done not because it has been compelled to do so, nor because protocol demands it, but from its own conviction.

Faced with common concerns, the socialist countries feel the need to do away with unnecessary formalities in their relations, and expand practical cooperation based on their common interests as they seek to interpret them more fully.

That is why the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance is concentrating increasingly on looking for solutions that would indeed promote progress. This is evident from the conclusions drawn by the 43rd (additional) session of the CMEA Council held recently in Moscow. The members of the socialist community are coming to realize that it is not enough merely to desire to set up joint, say Soviet-Hungarian, enterprises. Optimal solutions must be found that will take into account the real interests and possibilities of each of the sides, and the whole mechanism of socialist integration must be changed.

We Hungarians for a long time took pride - and I believe we had every reason to do so - in the openness of the policy we pursued after the events of 1956. Experience itself prompted this openness. It was the only way we could successfully fight demagogy, the only way we could regain the trust and confidence of the masses. Today we have to admit that the achievements we scored in the sixties and seventies have perhaps to a certain extent made us complacent. We continued to take pride in our openness, but we no longer always exposed - in fact we sometimes concealed - new problems: problems arising from changes in the world economy, that affected us adversely, and from our own miscalculations. When in spring of 1985 there was a turn towards glasnost in the Soviet Union, we repeated that in Hungary it had existed for a long time. But what we should have done was to advance further towards practical solutions to our problems.

This needs to be said for another reasons as well - for not everyone in Hungary feels the same about the changes taking place in the Soviet Union, although the overwhelming majority sincerely wish to see the perestroika in the Soviet Union implemented fully. If the pace of economic progress in the Soviet Union is stepped up, if its industry and agriculture are modernized and their output comes up to world standards, if socialist democracy spreads its wings, and that great country sets the world an example in the quality of life it offers its people - if all that is achieved it will have a most favourable effect on the other socialist countries, as well as on the economic, political and cultural development of those countries that have chosen the course of socialist orientation.

We have our share of people who have adopted a wait-and-see attitude. We have people who, faced with the difficulties the country has come up against, are inclined to be sceptical and mistrustful of the renovation process both in the Soviet Union and in the socialist world as a whole. Then there are people who, because of their great admiration for the technical achievements of the developed Western countries and the high standard of living of considerable sections of capitalist society, tend to regard the West as an example to be emulated. It is those who do not believe or do not want to believe in the success of perestroika.

The fact that today we are not trying to distance ourselves from our problems but to discuss them openly is due in no small measure to Soviet glasnost.

Addressing the National Assembly, our Prime Minister Karoly Grosz said: "The decisions taken by the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in November 1986, and in July of this year - decisions on which the government's programme is based - continue and renew the bold and farsighted policy that pulled the country out of the tragedy of 1956, advanced socialist agriculture to a new level, proposed and carried through the economic reform, and promoted socialist democracy. It is essential for us to adhere to the spirit of that policy, to acknowledge just as openly the problems that have accumulated in our economy and our political institutions, and to show as much determination as we did during the grim trials of the past."

Budapest

ON THE BRINK

ALEXANDER PUMPYANSKY

Today, fortunately, we can review calmly, or at any rate see it as past history, the most acute crisis of the nuclear age, when "Greek met Greek and the tug-of-war began," and the two superpowers clashed headlong. Twenty-five years have now elapsed since the Caribbean crisis.

We shall return to this subject in greater detail in a forthcoming issue, but in the meantime let us reconstruct the course of events.

The Cuban revolution aroused an outburst of fury in Washington that even today has not abated. Desperate attempts to wipe out a hated regime rapidly snowballed. A strict trade embargo, attempts on the life of Fidel Castro, the landing of mercenaries.... The only untried weapon in this escalation was that used in Grenada - the direct invasion of U.S. troops.... The government of revolutionary Cuba appealed to the Soviet Union for additional help. It was then decided that Soviet missiles should be deployed in Cuba. One fine day, or to be more exact, one cloudless day, the pilots of U-2 spy plane noticed signs of menacing changes in the Cuban landscape. In Washington the news was met with sheer disbelief. Moscow tried to deny the obvious. A psychological war erupted, reaching its peak with the virtual blockade of Cuba. President Kennedy announced a strict quarantine on all offensive weapons transported to Cuba," to come into effect 48 hours after its proclamation. Soviet missile transporters were approaching the Caribbean. U.S. naval forces were preparing to carry out the orders of their Commander-in-Chief. Hours, not days were bringing closer a direct military clash between the United States and the Soviet Union.

All night long lights burned in the White House. American correspondents reported that in Moscow too the lights were burning in the centres of decision-making. Then they went out. Many years later the authoritative Soviet journalist Alexei Adjubei provided the reason: Khrushchev, his colleagues and assistants were spending sleepless nights out of town. In Moscow no one must be allowed to notice the tension.

As the minutes ticked away, there was a nervous exchange of notes between the Kremlin and the White House. Finally the formula for agreement was worked out. The Soviet Union would return its missiles to their home bases. The United States would lift the blockade and give Cuba guarantees of non-aggression. Walter Lippmann noted that it would have only been fair if the United States removed its Jupiter medium-range missiles from Turkey. This was done later for "technical reasons," although the London Times described the measure as part of the crisis agreement, albeit a verbal one. It was never emphasized so as not to embarrass Turkey or NATO.

It is said that when the formula for disengagement was received, Robert Kennedy straightened up as if a great load had fallen from his back. At the time the President's brother was responsible for communications with Moscow. According to the same well-informed journalist, the American generals gnashed their teeth.

What are the lessons of that crisis, when the world really stood on the brink?

To begin with, who was responsible?
Cuba?

Faced with a deadly threat to its young revolution, an independent country was using its right to self-defence, and to choose its allies and means of self-defence. As a result of the Caribbean crisis, revolutionary Cuba achieved its principal goal. It received guarantees of non-invasion that amounted to a chance for survival.

Next. What leads to an international crisis - revolutionary changes in one part or another of the turbulent Third World. But the right of a nation to rebel against a despotic regime is incorporated in the American Declaration of Independence. It is not a revolution in itself that is fraught with the danger of war, but the export of counterrevolution, attempts by a superpower to strangle any form of development it finds unsuitable, as was the case with Cuba.

But what is the Soviet Union's share of the blame in the Caribbean crisis?

The risk - and this is indisputable - surpassed all reasonable possible gains. Yet the deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba did not violate any norms of international law or bilateral agreements. From the legal point of view the Soviet Union had done nothing that could be regarded as incriminating.

However, there is one thing that does not allow us to put a fullstop here. That is the silence that was maintained, and then the attempts to deny the fact of deployment. Twenty-five years later we are still having to pay for that, as it psychologically undermines the correctness of the stand taken. How many times since then has it been said that you can't do business with Moscow. And it has invariably been backed up with the fact that, speaking on the missiles in Cuba, the Soviet representative at the United Nations denied what was self-evident.

Honesty requires openness. To lie in politics is tantamount to planting mines in your own backyard.

From the legal and moral points of view, the stand taken by the United States looked absolutely indefensible. Washington's ultimatum and threats were arbitrary actions. The venture being prepared by the American naval forces was piracy pure and simple.

So what justified the actions of the White House in the eyes of Americans?

"Cuba's nerve." That a tiny island off the American coast had dared to act independently enraged Washington, seeming to give it the right to violate all and any laws.

"The Soviet challenge." Americans had been accustomed to regarding themselves as invulnerable. Why else had God placed America between two oceans if not to guarantee its safety from external threats?! Two world wars had only tended to strengthen this belief. And then suddenly Red missiles right on their doorstep.... It was more than they were prepared to tolerate.

But what about the American weapons virtually pricking the Soviet Union on all sides? What right had the Americans to have hundreds of bases in dozens of other countries?

In the course of the Caribbean crisis the United States impulsively, instinctively and aggressively sought to regain its feeling of absolute invulnerability. A natural and understandable desire in itself. Only there is a "but." That sense of safety or security cannot be an exclusively American prerogative. Other nations, too, have the same right to feel secure. By surrounding the Soviet Union with a circle of threats, the United States doomed itself to retaliatory measures. One fine day the Americans had to wake up to reality.

The Soviet missiles detected in Cuba were merely the alarm clock that awoke them. America had lost its position as "God's elect" several years before the Caribbean crisis, when intercontinental ballistic missiles took up their positions on Soviet launching pads. From that moment policies should have proceeded from the premise of mutual vulnerability and should have developed taking each other's security into account. That is the fundamental principle of the nuclear age.

The Caribbean crisis did, of course, upset the status quo. But it was a status quo based on inequality, and that should be borne in mind. The London Times cited figures: "Despite speeches only two years before claiming a missile gap in the Russians' favour, the U.S. then had an advantage over the Russians of about 3:1 in long-range bombers, about 6:1 in long-range missiles, and perhaps 16:1 in numbers of warheads." And despite that the Americans were shouting that they lagged catastrophically behind. How many times since then have we heard these deliberately panicky cries!

The Caribbean crisis was a bold demand for parity. Using shock tactics, Moscow proved that it would stand for no other kind of relations than relations between equals. The principle of parity was not recognized in Washington straight away, but having recognized it once - ten years after the events described - Washington is again trying to deny it in our decade. Nevertheless, the hard and dangerous lesson of those days played its part in instilling sober approaches.

This applies to both sides.

Today we understand that the Caribbean crisis was the result of the whole of postwar development. The weeks, days and, finally, hours of the Caribbean crisis concentrated all the preceding years of confrontation, bringing them to their logical climax - the threat of imminent catastrophe. The psychology of confrontation compelled both sides to flex their muscles and make a show of a strength - until the last moment. Fortunately, at the eleventh hour a different logic took over - the instinct for self-preservation, and saving common sense. Faced with the horror of the yawning gulf over the edge of the precipice, the potential adversaries stopped short and, with a sense of enormous relief, stepped back from the brink. The duel did not take place.

Today, perhaps, one can draw a parallel - the case of the Euromissiles. When deploying their Pershing 2 missiles a few minutes' flight from Moscow and Leningrad, the Americans forgot how they themselves had felt and reacted during the Caribbean crisis. (And directly violated the terms of the agreement, returning the missiles to places from which they had once been withdrawn.) Did the deployment of SS-20 missiles give the Americans the right to "retaliate"? That argument is unconvincing even to those who from the outset regarded the appearance of the SS-20s as a violation of the regional status quo and a new chapter in the frightening story of Soviet-American military and political confrontation. First of all, because the retaliatory action had been planned before a reason for it appeared: work on the Pershing 2s had begun before American intelligence espied the first SS-20s.

The current version is that responsibility for the Euromissile story rests with the Soviet military: if they hadn't begun playing with new toys, there would have been no crisis. I'm afraid that things are not quite as simple as that. When J. K. Galbraith was in Moscow this summer he pointed out that there is a certain dynamic in events: if a system of weapons looks feasible, it will inevitably be developed. The development of a new generation of highly-accurate medium-range missiles proceeded simultaneously on both Soviet and American testing grounds. But this round of the competition was won by the Soviet military. That was what was unusual. And that was what made the Americans so indignant. They were so accustomed to being first in all stages of the arms race that they regarded it as something of a casus belli.

But, on the other hand, I would submit that the very fact that the Soviet Union had outstripped the Americans in medium-range missiles did make the elimination of this class of missiles eventually possible. This is not meant to vindicate the military and the diplomats, nor the course negotiations took at different stages. Willy nilly, however, you have to draw the regrettable conclusion that the Soviet Union had to deploy its missiles for Washington to realize the advantages of the "zero option." (The "zero" acceptable to them is to give up their 350 warheads in exchange for 2,000 Soviet ones. Yet even then one hears dissatisfied grumbling that the deal is not to America's advantage, as their missiles are more valuable. Why? Because they are so close to their target.... What had been considered taboo as far as Soviet missiles were concerned and constituted a reason for going to war (!) is seen as both normal and advantageous for American missiles.... That is how America interprets parity.)

For some reason arguments of simple common sense penetrate American minds with difficulty. They invariably require arguments of force. That same logic lay behind the Caribbean crisis. After the Soviet missiles had made their far from short trip to the New World, Washington had to dampen its anti-Cuban and anti-Soviet sentiments. Then the situation heated up again.

Surely we can do without all these red-hot situations.

Surely it is clear that as long as military rivalry exists, each side will to one extent or another be tempted to outstrip the other; that confrontation and the arms race will automatically breed conditions for new crises and clashes.

That at times of aggravation it is necessary to act with caution and not let your feelings run away with you is too obvious to be regarded as the main lesson of the Caribbean crisis. Duels with nuclear arsenals are unthinkable. Fortunately, the first experiment was also the last. Time, however, places new demands on us. Enough of games with zero options when the gain of one is the loss of the other. We have to learn new rules - mutual benefits. It is necessary to give up by mutual agreement the idea of new classes of weapon, and not after they have already been deployed. Today's imperative should not be to outstrip the other and get ahead in the search for unattainable invulnerability, but to defuse together the dangers that have accumulated. That is what springs to mind when, 25 years on, one reflects on the lessons of the Caribbean crisis.

A farewell to "bulls"

FELIX GORYUNOV,
New Times economic observer

The worst panic ever to have seized the capitalist world's financial centres in postwar years has subsided, but the economic, financial and political problems that caused it remain.

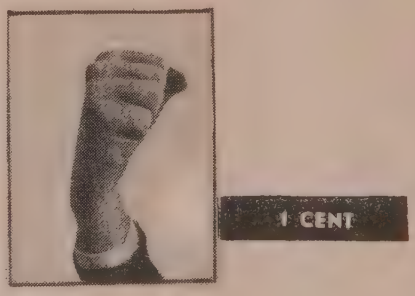
In stock broker sign language a hand raised palm inwards means "Sell!" On October 19 - which has already gone down in the history of capitalism as Black Monday - stock exchanges in New York and Hong Kong, Sydney and Tokyo, London and Singapore, Paris and Frankfort-on-Main witnessed massive displays of the backs of brokers' hands. But even the swiftest-moving failed to keep up with computers programmed to buy or sell equities. A computer with a nose for "bulls" and "bears" (falls and rises in stock prices) can handle up to 80 million equities a minute. Hence the electronic speed of stock price decline, which even the computers had hard time keeping up with. The digital indicator of Dow-Jones averages, showing current quotations on the New York Stock Exchange, developed a two-hour lag as shares in leading U.S. industrial companies plummeted. Altogether Black Monday cost shareholders 500 billion dollars. In percentage terms, prices fell to half those registered on Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929 - the day of the famous Wall Street crash, the prelude to the Great Depression of the early 1930s.

Will history repeat itself? Will the big drop trigger off a chain reaction of massive bankruptcies and lead to a new world crisis?

Brokers' sign language.

Military and monetary detonators

So far, the only apparent consequence of Black Monday is that "bulls" have given way to "bears" on all the Western bourses, and will probably remain in abeyance for some time. It is hard to tell what effect the plummeting of market prices will have, even on the U.S. economy. The urgent measures taken by the Reagan administration, the Federal Reserve Board and the central banks of the F.R.G. and Japan, plus the suspension of computerized stock exchange transactions (a move of no small importance) calmed panic-stricken shareholders. Optimistic statements by the White House and a number of business leaders also somewhat reassured the American public. Official optimists claim that the situation on the money markets has returned to normal, but many observers take a different view.

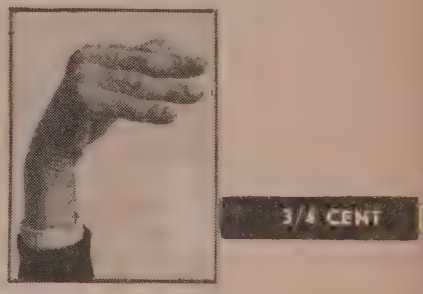


The New York Times is of the opinion that the world has changed, that the "euphoria" is over and it's time to pay the bill.

This needs some explaining. The world changed long before Black Monday, and the Wall Street stock market crash was not the first hangover from the "euphoria of Reaganomics." The point is that on previous occasions Washington managed to get its closest allies - Japan and the F.R.G. - to foot the bills. But as soon as one of them stalled, this - among other things - detonated a drop at stock exchanges where "bulls" had already started yielding ground to "bears" anyway.

Wall Street said its first farewell to "bulls" back in September. The fall in equity prices accelerated after it had become clear, in mid-October, that U.S. 1987 balance of trade deficit would beat even last year's all-time high. This meant that, in order to save the dollar from inflationary depreciation, bankers would start raising lending rates. In turn, a rise in interest on loans would inevitably have an adverse effect on the U.S. business scene, detract from industrialists' profits and, consequently, push equity prices down.

The aggravation in the Persian Gulf was another cause of nervousness on stock exchanges. The U.S. Navy's aggressive behaviour confirmed speculation that the Pentagon was taking the opportunity to justify to Congress the need for high military spending. The latter makes holes in the federal budget which Washington plugs with foreign loans. As the dollar depreciated, the influx of private capital to the U.S. from abroad ran almost dry. The U.S. now depends for financial support chiefly on the central banks of Japan and the West European countries.



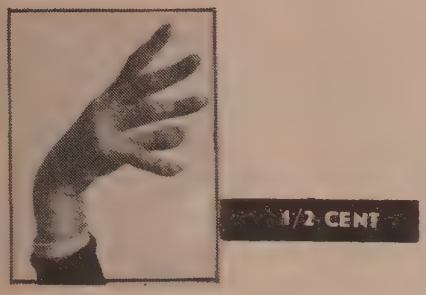
Under the Louvre Accord on currency stabilization signed by the Big Seven's financiers in Paris in February 1987, the dollar exchange rate started to be maintained by means of currency interventions, i.e., massive dollar purchases by the central banks of Japan, as well as the F.R.G., Britain and some other West European countries. Towards September, their support for U.S. currency cost them about 90 billion dollars - a sum roughly equal to the U.S. balance of payments and federal budget deficit over the past eight months. Which means that Washington's "euphoria" was paid for by its allies out of their own budgets.

A glass house

As well as exhausting the U.S. economic partners' finances, such large-scale currency interventions were senseless as they failed to stop the dollar falling anyway. But no sooner had Bonn finan-

ciers hinted to James Baker, the U.S. Treasury Secretary, that they were tired of maintaining the dollar than he threatened a further dollar decline against the DM. In the opinion of Western experts, it was this threat that sent stock brokers' hands up and started the bearish programmes of stockmarket computers in the financial centres of capitalism

As they analyze the circumstances which cause the stock market crash, and try to ascertain what triggered it off, Western capitals are putting the blame on the Reagan administration. They complain that Washington has for too long tried to solve its financial problems at the expense of others instead of putting its own house



in order - a glass house, as it has turned out. But people living in glass houses shouldn't throw dollars. Today the White House is being urged, from every quarter, substantially to cut its federal budget deficit and to stimulate its economy by reducing the lending rate lest the stock market crisis result in bank collapses and a deep depression such as the one that followed the crash of 1929.

Washington is also being called upon to strengthen the dollar through closer currency cooperation with its allies. It is even suggested that a Big Seven summit be held to decide on joint measures to stabilize the economic and money-market situation in the West. What all this comes down to is bringing into play the state--monopoly market regulation leverage evolved by the free enterprise system to provide against another Great Depression.

The stock market crash revealed the Western economy's vulnerability not only to unpredictable money market fluctuations, but also to its leader's "power politics." For this reason U.S. economic and financial problems have now become a stumbling block for the capitalist economy worldwide.

Federal budget deficit. Reducing it could make the U.S. less dependent on foreign capital and strengthen the dollar. The deficit could be reduced by means of substantial cutback on military spending and or an increase in taxes (insisted upon by Democrats in Congress). Neither prospect suits the administration, however. Moreover, the curtailment of federal spending could also lead to a slump in the U.S., where government orders keep a considerable proportion of industrial plants busy.

Lending rate. In order to liven up the economy by less expensive credits, some

leading commercial banks have reduced interest on loans under pressure from the Federal Reserve Board. Nevertheless, further reduction of the lending rate is not without risk as the result could be a dramatic outflow of private capital from the U.S. and the further weakening of the dollar.

The U.S. banking system was hardest hit by the big drop. And this in a situation where 1,500 of America's 15,000 banks are beset with serious difficulties. At an estimate by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) published back in September, the number of banks to collapse will reach 200 before this year is out, surpassing the record figure of the thirties. Even the more reputable banks are in jeopardy. In September, the federal authorities had to redeem the leading Texas bank, the First City Bancorporation, from creditors for 1.5 billion dollars. The investments banks that finance stock exchange transactions are in the most dangerous position, however. The biggest of them, Salomon Brothers, announced a drastic cut in business a week before Black Monday. Although the FDIC hastened to reassure the public that there was no cause for panic, it had only 18 billion dollars to its name - not much of a sum under present circumstances to support the FDIC-insured banks with if there is a run on them by their clients.

Business activity is the administration's biggest hope. After the "mini-slump" of the summer of 1986 - which, incidentally, didn't pass without a dramatic fall in stocks - economic growth rates averaged about 2.4 per cent a year. The jobless figure hit the eighties' low (six per cent of the work force). Before the stock market panic, the leading corporations' profits continued to grow. This economic growth made Wall Street a bullish market. Today American economists are fearful lest recent stock market passions scare the public, depress demand and, consequently, reduce industrialists' profits.

Foreign trade. While to some extent increasing U.S. exports, the fall in the dollar exchange rate failed to reduce the trade balance deficit. The magazine Business Week sees the root cause of this in the gap - unheard-of since the end of World War II - between demand and industrial output in the U.S. The weekly explains the gap as being caused by an "import habit" developed by American consumers. In the meantime, if the foreign trade balance does not improve in the near future, the position of the dollar, deplorable as it is, will get even worse. At the weekly's estimate, America's foreign debt will run to 400 billion dollars towards the end of the year. And should the present gap between imports and exports persist, the U.S. will owe other countries about a trillion dollars - or the equivalent of the Third World's total foreign debt - by the early nineties.

The dollar. For the above-mentioned reasons, Washington cannot do without support from its partners in the Big Seven, however eager it may be to strengthen its currency's position. This is due not only to the double deficit - in payments and trade. About three trillion so-called Eurodollars are now circulating in the international money markets and a sizeable proportion of this sum is "hot money" - short-term funds transffered from one currency to another by speculators seeking quick returns. Most of the operations involving Eurodollars are transacted in the City of London. So it was probably no fortuity that Nigel Lawson, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, and James Baker, the U.S. Treasury Secretary, suddenly suggested early in October that the International Monetary Fund should link the floating exchange rates of Western currencies (especially the dollar) to fluctuations in the prices of raw materials, gold included.

It is still too early to tell whether the monetary policy of the West will stress the provision of raw material and gold props for the dollar or take a different course. Black Monday has made one thing perfectly clear: over the years of Reaganomics the Western economy has become more dependent than ever on the whims of the dollar. Doing away with them is an urgent task for all the captains of capitalist commerce.

Stock-vending computers can be turned

Photos from Svenska Dagbladet (Sweden)

off, but who can vouch that the stock market will not again be taken over by "bears?"

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION: THE LODESTAR

AN IMPULSE TO CREATIVE THOUGHT

A faithful New Times reader of long standing, I want to say that it has recently carried a number of articles on socialist renovation that seem extremely important and useful, as well as articles showing how the Soviet state developed in the 1920s and 1930s.

These articles, containing a wealth of new material, give considerable food for thought. The energetic and trenchant style of New Times articles is stimulating discussion in our country, too, both at home and in the workplace.

Today New Times is as essential for me as was the newspaper Tägliche Rundschau published by the Soviet military administration in Berlin in the period 1946-49. For us young Germans, that newspaper was the voice of the Soviet Union, the voice of the Leninist party we so urgently needed.

I joined actively in the building of socialism on German soil and continue to work today. That is why it is so important for us to know what new ideas have been put forward in the Soviet Union. We are studying these ideas carefully. Your example has always been very instructive for us. Following this example, our farmers have organized cooperatives, and factories have gone over to operating on a profit-and-loss basis.

Many of my colleagues and I personally believe that the reforms now under way in the Soviet Union will release tremendous creative potential for the further building of socialism. This applies equally to the German Democratic Republic, given its history and geographical situation.

The development of socialist society seems a much simpler process to those who have not lived under capitalism - I have in mind people between the ages of 30 and 50 - than it does to people like myself. They think of it as a planned evolution. But we of the older generation (I am 64) came to realize that in the years of struggle.

This struggle has enriched our experience. Thanks to it we - remaining loyal to our political views - have been able properly to understand the democratic reforms you are now carrying out in your country.

I write this on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution. Please accept it as a token of respect on the part of Germans whom you at one time regarded almost as a "lost" generation.

Nevertheless, for many years we have firmly held our place in the ranks of the fighters for peace and socialism. There is one further point. I fully share the Soviet view that theoretical discources about a single German nation are irrelevant today. A nation cannot be proclaimed by decree. It is equally impossible to establish in the German Democratic Republic the outdated model of the bourgeois nation of Bismarck's day.

This is precisely what the Western media are trying to do. However, most people in both German states are striving for friendly and good-neighbourly relations and searching for ways of establishing such relations.

Following your example, we too could publish more trenchant articles on political and historical subjects that would fill in the blanks in our history. My friends and I believe that such a measure would benefit the whole German people.

ERNST JÄGER
Coswig, G.D.R.

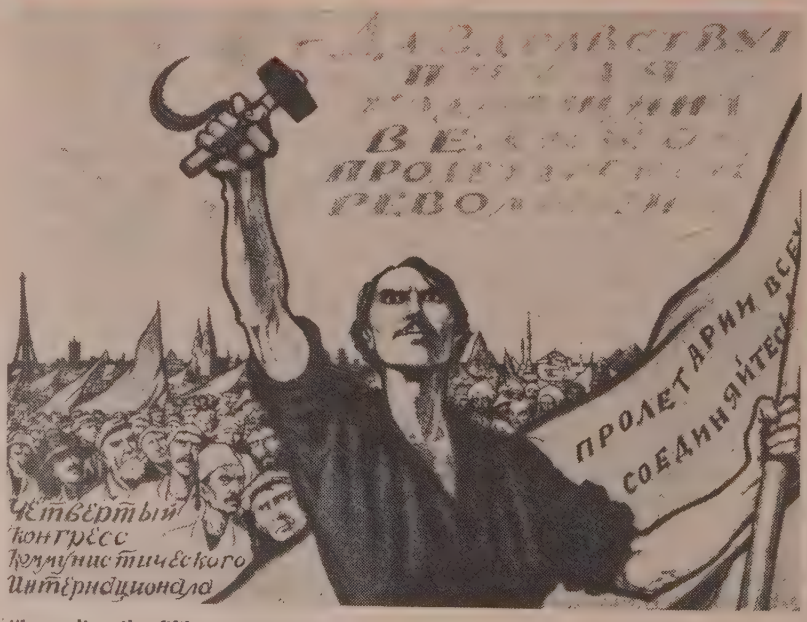
THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA IS UNAVOIDABLE

Exorbitant military budgets, bribe taking, corruption and abuse of power have caused cruel poverty, hunger, ruin and illiteracy in the Third World. The multibillion debts of Third World countries to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Monetary Fund and other major lending bodies are an obstacle to achieving economic independence and a decent life for their people in the future too.

All these facts, I am sure, are likely to enhance the prestige of socialism in the Third World. The dawn of a new era will come to us too. We hope this will happen before the end of the 20th century.

W.M. SHANTHA WEERASINGHA
Diyatalawa, Sri Lanka

IMAGES OF THE REVOLUTION



"Long live the fifth anniversary of the Great proletarian revolution!" Poster by Ivan Simakov, 1922.

LOOKING BACK

PINNING GREAT HOPES

I come from a worker's family. For some time I was a full-time worker in the Social Democratic Party of Austria and in 1934, after the February uprising, I joined the Communist Party, then operating underground. Today, at 82, I am still a member of the party.

I well remember how Otto Bauer, the Austrian Social Democratic leader, advised us young enthusiasts not to read works by Rosa Luxemburg and August Bebel so as "not to waste time."

But I did not heed this advice. Though a critical man, I supported - as it turned out later - not only your correct decisions but some of the wrong ones you subsequently revised.

Today I have understood that Marxism-Leninism is constantly and creatively developing and that dogmas are alien to this brilliant theory. I must admit, nevertheless, that I feel chagrined when fresh reports reach me from the Soviet Union critical of what is taking place in the country.

As a man with rich experience of life and long party standing, I wholeheartedly support the policy of new thinking and the reforms initiated by the CPSU and its leader Mikhail Gorbachev. I pin great hopes on this policy.

KARL MANDLER
Vienna, Austria

Watercolour showing the village of Bombon, where Lenin went for a brief holiday in 1909. It was sent to us from France by George Duchesne, who collaborated documentary about Lenin's stay there. The drawing was presented to George Duchesne by its author - artist Frédéric Longuet, a grandson of Karl Marx.

PEACE MEANS LIFE

WAR IS A TRAGEDY

I lost all my people in the last war. In the postwar years we worked hard to restore the country devastated by the nazis. I failed to build a family and give birth to children, and now I am a lonely old woman.

Having lived for so many years, I can firmly say to everyone: war is a deep grief. It does not only kill people but also deprives those who remain alive of any bright hopes for the future.

It is my great desire that people never again suffer grief at the loss of their dear and near ones and that the terrible shadow of war never touches them.

NADEZHDA SOKOLOVA
Krasnodar, U.S.S.R.

I'LL WORK FOR PEACE ALL MY LIFE

I am a 16-year-old high school student from Los Angeles, California. On June 6, 1987, I started a fast (juice only) against the nuclear war threat.

I have always felt frustrated because there is not much that I can do towards global disarmament and bettering relations between Russia and the U.S.

Anyway, I want your country and your government continue your work towards achieving peace on earth, towards a nuclear-free world. I am going to devote my life to that.

I want you to know that people in the U.S. support you and your fight for peace.

COCO WEINRAUB
Santa Monica, U.S.A.

IF WE ALL TOOK THE TIME AND EFFORT

I believe the average American and Russian could coexist in a friendly atmosphere if we all took the time and effort to try to understand each other. Our governments are different, but people are the same all over the world. It is too bad we are not able to take the best things out of each people, combine them and live happily ever after.

GENEVIA C. CHRISTIAN
Garland, U.S.A.

COMMENT

been linked with the October revolution, with the important events that have taken place in Lenin's homeland.

Therefore on the eve of the great holiday we share, we want to express our deep gratitude to the Soviet people for their diverse and extremely effective aid and support in all our affairs.

NGUYEN HUU GI
Vietnam

Well begun is only half done

BORIS PUGO,
First Secretary, Central Committee, Communist Party of Latvia

An anniversary is normally an occasion for recalling our achievements. I shall permit myself to depart from this tradition and concentrate on our headaches, the problems still awaiting solutions.

Most of these problems have to do with further democratization and the promotion of self-criticism and glasnost in all the spheres of the republic's life - in particular, the economy. It must be conceded that labour productivity (a cornerstone of economic progress) is not growing evenly all along the line and, most importantly, is not sufficiently high everywhere. The key to overall acceleration therefore lies, to my mind, in the democratization of production management.

The fact that the new director of the Riga automobile factory was elected had repercussions all over the country. But that was the culmination of a process, so to say. By way of experiment, many managerial posts had been made elective in the republic long before that. Today we have nearly 7,000 elected managers at various levels and these constitute the vanguard of perestroika.

We set great store by agro-industrial integration and the establishment of agricultural firms and integrated factory farms. Four such firms and six factory farms have already been set up on the basis of economically efficient collective and state farms. Not many, perhaps, but it is only the beginning. Several farm produce processing, storage and marketing facilities have been attached to them. This makes for fuller use of the farms' production potential. Much of what has previously been dead stock is now going into the reconstruction of badly neglected processing plants. Economic levers of production management - such as cost-accounting, self-financing and self-repayment - are being used.

Agricultural firms have been granted the right to do business with their counterparts elsewhere in the country and abroad on their own. This is an entirely new development. Interstate exchange of production experience and techniques is on the way; the procedure for purchasing the modern equipment required for the acceleration of scientific and technological progress is being simplified. Take the Adazi agricultural firm, for instance. It has recently signed mutually profitable contracts with the Witkowo (Poland) and Slusovice (Czechoslovakia) cooperatives for the manufacture of farm products and - surprisingly - electronic computers.

Perestroika demands that Soviet products not only be up to the highest foreign standards, but even surpass them. It is common knowledge that the end product depends for its high quality on the efforts of dozens, hundreds and even thousands of factories rather than just one. We have worked out the comprehensive Quality-90 programme aimed at pooling their efforts and integrating all the quality factors. Towards the end of the current five-year period, the implementation of this programme is to bring about a substantial increase in the output of top-quality products and to put our key manufactured goods in a class with the world's best. In short, we have embarked upon many ambitious undertakings. But well begun is, however, only half done.

It is by no means my intention here to give the reader the impression that from the outset perestroika in the republic has been plain sailing. Far from it. Unfortunately, we've had more than our share of blunders and miscalculations. Some of our economic managers are all talk and little action as far as perestroika is concerned. To quote Mark Twain, "noise proves nothing. Often a hen that has merely laid an egg cackles as if she had laid an asteroid." We are being held back by mental inertia, habitual reliance on instructions from higher authorities, and sheer sloth.

Some people here think that Latvia should leave well alone. Its development rate is pretty stable; it leads the country in per capita national income and comes third in the per capita output of meat, milk and eggs; it is a major producer of top-quality goods, and ranks high in retail goods turnover and the consumption of services. All this seems to leave little to be desired, so Latvia can confine itself to certain minor improvements.

Indulging in such complacency and, worse, behaving accordingly, is tantamount to dooming the republic to stagnation and apathy, as has sometimes been the case in the past. But there is no going back.

What is the republic's Party organization doing about that? Our main preoccupations are to ascertain where we lag behind economic, scientific and cultural progress, to release the people's creative initiative and enlist Communists in painstaking educational work at grassroots level.

We are making every effort to change planning methods. This is not an end in itself. By giving work collectives a greater say in decision-making, and by using economic levers and a material incentive system as the basis of the new planning practice, we are encouraging the working people to display greater initiative and imbuing them with a keener sense of moral and material responsibility.

Planning is an immutable principle of socialism. A great deal of attention is now being given to coordinating the interests of individual industries and individual territories in our republic (as elsewhere in the country). This is being done stage by stage. First, schemes for the development and distribution of the republic's productive forces and industries are worked out for a term of fifteen years. Then these schemes are brought together in an integrated whole.

Such a republic-wide scheme for the period of 1991-2005 has already been drafted. Its compilers have drawn upon the tentative plans outlined by industrial ministries and departments for the development of the production plants already in operation in the republic and for the construction of new ones. This effort involves certain difficulties stemming from past methods of economic management.

Specifically, we had a rather hard time rejecting the suggestion of certain national ministries that an automobile tyre plant, a production line factory and an oil refinery be built in our republic. Moreover, we have our doubts about the expediency of building a new F.R.G.-U.S.S.R. ferry port in Latvia.

The reason we disagree with the central authorities on these issues is that we have difficulty running even the part of the national economy our republic accounts

for at present. In a situation where the production facilities we already have are working at half capacity for want of manpower, we deem it inexpedient to build new ones.

Improvements in the social sphere are high on the list of the country's priorities today. Until fairly recently most of Latvia's Party executives and economic managers believed that social problems were getting all the attention they needed. They seemed to have ample reason for thinking so. Housing construction plans were being fulfilled. The number of kindergartens, schools, polyclinics and hospitals continued to grow. In the mid-seventies we worked out the country's first comprehensive programme for the mechanization of manual jobs and hard physical labour. Somewhat later, we concentrated on increasing the output of consumer goods, improving their quality and broadening the range of goods available. Moreover, we tackled the problems involved in improving the demographic situation, offered large families higher benefits and saw to it that most factories had their amenities improved.

For all that, if we take a realistic view of things, with the requirements of perestroika (and of our own conscience, which is perhaps the same thing) in mind, we shall see that no breakthrough has been made in the social sphere. Public services and cultural institutions are being built at a much lower rate than that of industrial construction. The social sphere still gets only the "leftovers" of capital investments - 3 to 4 per cent at most. As a result, many citizens wait for years to be rehoused. In Riga, our capital city, alone, nearly 60,000 families are on the waiting list for flats. Many complain to the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party about poor living and working conditions and other inadequacies of everyday life.

We are not going to tolerate this. The Central Committee has set local Party committees the task of drawing up five-year welfare programmes for every work collective, every town and region, and of strictly fulfilling them. The drawing up of these programmes was accompanied by a collective analysis of options, ideas and suggestions in this sphere.

At the same time, we have been busy working out long-term comprehensive programmes such as Housing-2000, Population, Public Health; programmes for the development of consumer goods production and the service sphere and the mechanization of manual jobs. All these programmes are to be implemented towards the end of this century.

As we look ahead into the future, we try not to lose sight of the present. The attitude to the social sphere on the part of economic managers, government and trade union bodies must be changed now. We must tighten control over the implementation of social programmes. Previously, there had been no cases of factory directors being fired for failure to provide enough canteen seating space or amenities. Today neglect of workers' everyday needs can cost a director his job.

Today life in the republic is keynoted by glasnost, openness - although not everyone in Latvia applauds it.

Why glasnost? The CPSU gave a clear-cut answer to this question at its 27th Congress and at the January 1987 plenum. It is glasnost that makes people believe in the Party and state policy and impels them to active involvement in this policy, in perestroika.

We refer to glasnost as part and parcel of democracy - and simultaneously as a political tool. Isn't there a contradiction here? Or worse still, isn't this blasphemy? Nothing of the kind. Democratization has a tangible effect on the whole range of social relations, political and national ones included. After all, we are constantly coming under fire from nationalists abroad.

The policy of openness has brought into the public eye everywhere - in Latvia as elsewhere - problems of national relations, about which, for some reason, we did not previously talk a great deal, or which we simply passed over in silence, proceeding from the "idea" that under socialism inter-nationality relations are conflict-free. It was pointed out at the 27th CPSU Congress that keen contradictions in this extremely complex sphere of human relations were sometimes ignored, and no objective assessments of the situation made.

This did not have an altogether wholesome effect on people's morale and ethics, and hardly contributed to the harmony of inter-nationality relations. The dialectics of these relations is a multiple factor. It depends on how rationally productive forces are distributed and developed; on how cleverly the interests of each nation are combined with those of the entire Union; on each nation's contribution to the progress of the integrated economic complex of the country; on the character of each republic's economic and cooperative links within this complex; and on many other things besides.

We know from history that any nation, big or small, is doomed to regress if it withdraws into its shell. As a member of the close-knit family of the Soviet peoples, Latvia has surpassed its 1940 level of industrial production 55-fold and taken the lead in the country in many economic and social indicators. And we are a small republic, mind you; we have no oil, gas, coal, metal or cotton of our own, and we are poor in energy resources.

We owe our national progress to the socialist division of labour and (please do not take this as mere rhetoric) the fraternal friendship of the Soviet peoples. I am convinced that the greater the economic, spiritual and social effect of perestroika on an all-Union scale, the more favourable conditions will arise for the all-round development of the Latvian people.

And now a few more words about glasnost. We welcome it for its promotion of impartial criticism of our shortcomings, omissions and miscalculations, and for intensifying the exchange of authentic information about the life of every Soviet republic, every nationality and ethnic group.

A commission has been formed in Latvia recently, for instance, to deal with problems of national and inter-nationality relations. Letters are already pouring into it from working people who want to share their views on the situation in multi-national work collectives, bi-lingualism, problems of inter-nationality communication, national representation in the government and Party bodies of the republic, and the preservation of monuments of Latvian national culture and history. Many of the suggestions found in these letters are already being put into practice.

And is it not thanks to glasnost that we are now much freer to discuss our pressing economic and social problems? A special law on national referenda and discussions has been adopted. Before being enacted, the Law on State Enterprise was discussed in almost every work collective. During the discussions thousands of constructive remarks and proposals were made and amendments suggested.

The question of whether we should built the Daugavpils hydroelectric station was recently a subject of wide discussion in the press and at public meetings. The public was seriously concerned about the probable economic, ecological, social and moral consequences of the project being implemented.

Characteristically, the discussion attracted not only Latvians, but Russians, Ukrainians, Jews and representatives of many other nationalities residing in the republic. There were cases of Latvians declaring for the construction of the station, hazardous to our ecology, and people of other nationalities vehemently objecting to it. And vice versa, of course. In short, what the discussion revealed was not nationalism, but the togetherness and civic spirit of Latvia's working people, and their common concern for the fate of their native land. ■

The Revolution and Sovietologists

No event in the history of mankind has aroused such heated debate and passionate conflicts of opinion as the October revolution. Its influence on human destiny has been universally recognized. How is this epoch-making event portrayed in the work of foreign scholars? New Times put this question to VLADIMIR BULDAKOV, a research associate of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences' Institute of History.

Along what lines are studies of the revolution now being pursued in the West?

Many specialists are studying the problem. The group formed 12 years ago with its centre in Britain, which could be described as an informal association of historians, and which includes British, Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, West German and Japanese scholars, alone numbers more than 100 members. Sovietology research centres concentrating chiefly on the October revolution exist in the United States, which publishes the largest number of works on the subject, as well as in the F.R.G., France and Japan.

Most importantly of all, lately the approach to analyzing the events of October 1917 has radically changed. In the past, for a variety of reasons bourgeois historians painted the revolution in predominantly sombre and anti-communist hues. Some Sovietologists accused the Bolsheviks of betraying the Allies - the United States, Britain and France - describing the revolution as an act of national egoism that led to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and thereby dealt a blow to France.... Others claimed that the Bolsheviks had simply used force to get rid of their rivals. Others again tried to prove that the left-wing Socialist Revolutionaries had been provoked into starting an armed uprising so that they could subsequently be destroyed as the opposition.

There is yet another version, put forward mostly by scholars from the newly independent countries. I would describe it as a view of the revolution through rose-tinted glasses. To a certain extent they idealized events and therefore concluded that since the revolution had been victorious, all the major difficulties were over, and that the Bolsheviks' example should therefore be copied.

Both these approaches exist today. But it is significant that the first has had to retreat noticeably.

What has made it retreat?

First, primitive anti-communism no longer satisfies serious scholars: there have been so many mass social revolutionary movements in the 20th century. Secondly, the stability and dynamism of the Soviet system are indisputable, as is the growing international significance of the experience of the October revolution. The British historian Paul Dukes has even published a book, "October and the World," in which he sets out to trace the effect of the revolution in Russia on the rest of the world.

No small part has also been played by the Soviet historians' rejection of the interpretation of the revolution given in the well-known "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)." A revolutionary process implies a struggle between old and new, and it takes place through the consciousness and minds of men. Yet, in that book, the masses were transformed from an independent subject of the revolutionary process into a passive object of propaganda. Instead of portraying the revolution as an extremely complex phenomenon, the theory of two camps was promoted, with the autocracy, the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeois parties, and finally the opposition in the Bolsheviks' ranks all lumped together in the counterrevolutionary camp. Instead of the critical analysis Lenin had called for, a primitive oversimplification took place. This last resulted in the downgrading of the true political significance of Bolshevism. And the October revolution itself was only shown as an act of violence, which was hard to justify in the eyes of subsequent generations. One could put it this way: the revolution was dehumanized, thereby the fact was ignored that the revolution had produced not only a new economic and social system, but also a new scale of moral values.

No less dangerous is the tendency to paint a glowing picture of the revolution. But that too has recently been on the wane. Gradually a genuine desire to master the theory of revolution is gaining the upper hand.

What concrete contribution have foreign historians made?

As far as non-Marxist historians are concerned, in the second half of the sixties scholars who insisted that history should remain outside the sphere of politics and concentrated on studying the facts, without making generalizations, began for the first time to acknowledge widely that the October revolution was not a specifically Russian deviation from the pattern of world history, not just a palace coup resulting from the specific conditions obtaining in Russia, but the outcome of a mass popular movement.

However, the development of such a school of thought is not by any means making easy progress. The French historian Marc Ferro at one time set out to prove that the people's revolution had soon been transformed into the bureaucratization of the Soviets. Nor, incidentally, had he renounced this theory when he spoke at the international conference on the October revolution in Odessa last May.

A distinctive feature of the new generation of Western authors is that they are studying the October revolution within the framework of so-called social history. They concentrate on the preoccupations and aspirations of the masses who took part in the revolution. It should be recalled that in the past most Sovietologists based their studies on "political history," i.e., the activity of leading political figures. This was mixed with rabid anti-communism. Thus, proceeding from the new premises such American historians as Alexander Rabinowitch, Ronald Suny, and William Rosenberg, sternly rebuked the anti-communist authors. Their criticism was convincing, but incomplete.

The "social historians" reduce the Russian revolutionary process to a series of isolated revolutions - of the workers, the peasants, the soldiers and the different nationalities. Notably, depending on the specialization of the author, each of them is at times portrayed as the principal one. Naturally, the conclusions drawn are often contradictory. For example, Evan Modsely and Allan Wildman, who concentrated on the revolutionary movement in the armed

forces, maintain that the victory of the Bolsheviks was only possible because of the soldiers' and sailors' protests against the war. In turn, those who study the peasant movement conclude that the fate of the revolution was decided by the spontaneous desire of the peasantry to see their Utopian dream of equal ownership of land realized.

Which studies do you regard as the most serious?

Those that deal with the struggle of the Russian proletariat - the real leaders of the revolution. Such American historians as Steven Smith, David Mandel, William Rosenberg and Diana Koenker convincingly prove the high level of class consciousness and organization of the working class in Russia, and that their actions clearly reveal that they had exhausted all possibilities of compromise with the bourgeoisie.

It is significant that many historians have started to take an interest in the course of the revolution not only in the capitals, but also in the provinces. No longer satisfied with the theory of a palace revolt, they are seeking to build a model of the revolutionary process throughout all of Russia. The most striking example is the book "The Revolution on the Volga. 1917 in Saratov," by Donald Raleigh, Professor at the University of Hawaii, published last year. The book is based on a study of Soviet publications.

Have historians of the different Western schools anything in common?

More often than not the starting point for their research is the theory of "modernization." What is that theory? It holds that a revolution takes place when as a result of its natural evolution a society finds itself at an impasse. And they maintain that the way out is to rise to the "heights" of the advanced capitalist countries. In respect of Russia, they maintain that her aim was to draw closer to Western standards. Today, on the other hand, developing countries are advised to follow the evolutionary path. For example, to follow recommendations made by the International Monetary Fund and not dream of more....

Don't you think that Marxists should cooperate, say, with the objectivists?

That is absolutely essential. And not only because some of the methods used by Western authors are universally applicable (for instance, the method of quantitative analysis) and their use would make the results of research more convincing. Cooperation between historians also promotes closer relations between peoples. If understanding is reached on the essence of the revolution, then it will become clear that what it ushered in was not a "communist threat" to the Western world, but a new scale of human values. This sort of understanding is essential for the new mode of thinking. It can play a decisive role in the universal change in social consciousness that is so essential on the threshold of the 21st century.

Interviewer B. BORISOV

Bombay's Battleship Potemkin

A stern-faced military police guard carefully checked the photograph on my press card with the original "me." Understandably, as Defence Department installations in any country are hardly the most usual place for a foreign journalist to visit. And the purpose of my visit to the headquarters of India's naval forces was rather unusual. I had set out to discover whether the lexicon of Indian sailors included any word that could be regarded as the equivalent of the term "bratva" (fellows) as the Russian Navy. This information was essential for me for a story about an extremely interesting page in Indian history that echoed the revolutionary events in Russia at the beginning of the century. I was happy to find that such an equivalent did exist - it more or less corresponded to the Russian "fellows" or "brothers." As for the episode itself, I was supplied with additional information by my guides.

The local equivalent of the Russian "fellows" rang out over Bombay harbour in February 1946, when developments on one of the naval vessels there closely followed the sequence of events on the battleship Potemkin. Sailors on the naval training vessel Talwar voiced their indignation over the rotten food they were being served. British officers met their complaints with ridicule. The angry sailors gathered in the bunk room. And it was there, as on the Potemkin, that the cry rang out: "How long can we put up with this, fellows?"

The next day the crew went on hunger strike. The sailors on the Talwar tore down the Union Jack and hoisted the flags of the Indian National Congress, the Moslem League and the Communist Party - which at that time had not yet split. This action symbolized the unity of all the principal political movements in the struggle against British colonialism. Other ships at anchor in the port of Bombay followed suit. Thousands of sailors set up a central strike committee. News of the strike quickly reached the shore, and the townsmen backed the sailors. A general strike began in Bombay.

Aruna Asaf Ali, a prominent public figure, who took an active part in those events and remembered them well, said in an interview for New Times: "I would say that the prologue to that revolutionary action was the mutiny on the battleship Potemkin, and in a wider sense, the October revolution in Russia. It had a revolutionizing effect on public opinion in India, and forced the British colonialists to doubt, for the first time, that their presence in our country would last forever."

And what was the direct reaction of the Indian public to the gunshot fired by the

THE THEME OF REVOLUTION IN ART

Natan Altman. "Land to Peasants," "Factories to Workers." Sketches of the Palace Square decoration panels. Petrograd, 1918.

Aurora signalling the start of the revolution? How did the colonized people of India react to the first decisive blow to imperialism, and, consequently, to colonialism?

The report prepared for London immediately after the revolutionary events in Petrograd by Montegue Chelmsford, then Britain's man in India, was extremely revealing. I was shown a copy of the document at the National Archives. I quote: "The revolution in Russia in its beginning was regarded in India as a triumph over despotism....It has given an impetus to Indian political aspirations."

The colonialists tried to dampen these "aspirations." They began to tighten the screws and take preventive measures to halt any activization of the liberation movement in India following the events in Russia in 1917. But their efforts proved of no avail. In the National Museum there is an interesting chart showing the growth of anti-colonialist activities in India over that period. In 1915 there were 28 rebellions, in 1916, 30, and in 1917-18, 124.

That the October revolution influenced the national liberation struggle of the Indian people is acknowledged by Indian historians. K.M. Panicker, an expert on modern Indian history, wrote: "Perhaps the greatest single event to influence the political and moral development of India during this century was the Russian revolution. The assumption of power by the proletariat had a profound effect on the people of India."

At the National Museum of India I came across the Curzon Ultimatum. That document is part of the post-revolutionary history of our country: in May 1923 the British representative in Moscow handed the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs a note containing humiliating political demands to the young Soviet republic. But how did the British Foreign Office's note addressed to Moscow find its way to the museum in Delhi? Probably because it included a section headed "India." In it the Soviet government was accused of supporting the national liberation movement in India and it was demanded that this support be discontinued. As can be seen from the Curzon Ultimatum, the British found no evidence of material aid. But they were not mistaken about moral support. Nor could they fail to recognize that the revolution in Russia had acted as a mighty stimulus to the liberation movement in India.

Let us look back to those times and consider what prompted a section on India in the Curzon Ultimatum.

In the earliest years after the revolution Lenin predicted that the peoples of the East, and specifically the people of India, would play their part in resolving the destinies of the entire world. He urged that a hand of friendship and brotherhood be extended to the people of India and to all other peoples in the East.

The founder of the modern Indian state, Jawaharlal Nehru, could have been said to have accepted the hand offered by Lenin. For he called on his countrymen, as the Delhi paper, The National Herald, wrote, "to closely watch the glorious experiment being carried out in Soviet Russia because an independent India would have to learn a lot from it."

When India was still under colonial rule Nehru and his colleagues found in the earliest achievements of the country that had breached the seemingly impregnable fortress of imperialism a source of courage and social optimism. Hardly a day passed without the colonial administration claiming that the Bolshevist experiment was dead and buried. The Allahabad newspaper of the Indian patriots, The Independent, said on January 14, 1920: "Bolshevism has been a success because it has kindled a hope in the minds of the masses. It is the hope of a better future and more rational conditions of life."

What prompted this kind of recognition was the fact that the anti-imperialist essence of the revolution in Russia had an immense influence on the oppressed in India, at that time the victim of imperialist domination. And that explains why the notorious Curzon Ultimatum contained a special section on India.

The emergence of a socialist state in a territory covering one sixth of the planet had not only a social effect, but also a conceptual impact on the world's oldest civilization.

The eminent Indian humanist poet Subramanya Bharati, just two weeks after the October revolution, wrote his poem "The New Russia," in which he describes the revolution in Russia as the manifestation of the will of Mahashakti - the immense force that unites everything living on earth and determines its spiritual and material evolution. He called the Russian revolution an event that ushered in a new period in world history. In a later essay, in 1920, the poet wrote: "No doubt, as compared to the Western countries, the new Russia is showing examples of higher culture and morality."

All that is far from being the only evidence of how deeply and in how many different ways the Aurora's gunshot found its echo in the hearts and minds of the Indian people. Not for nothing did Romain Rolland compare the events of that period in Russia and India to two great wings of a single revolution. "And I hope," he added, "that they will carry it forward at a confident pace."

This unity made it possible to sum up the political and philosophical values of the two countries in the Delhi Declaration, signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi, which both Delhi and Moscow believe must become an imperative in international life.

LEONID ZHEGALOV
Delhi **our own correspondent**

CHESS

THE RUSSIA FESTIVAL WINNERS

The Russia chess festival has ended in Sochi, the health resort on the Black Sea coast. The programme included the 21st tournament in memory of Mikhail Chigorin, an international women's tournament, and a mass chess tournament. New Times instituted special prizes for participants in these competitions.

The prize "For the Most Spectacular Combination" went to international master Suzana Maksimovic, a member of the Yugoslav Olympic team, who took part in the women's tournament.

Julian Hodgson, an international master from Britain, who took part in the Chigorin memorial, was awarded the prize "The Best Game in the Chigorin Style."

A New Times prize was also presented to Igor Plotnikov, a geologist from Severouralsk who participated in the mass chess tournament.

The editors of New Times warmly congratulate the winners and wish them new and better successes in future competitions.

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The Communist Party of China (CPC) opened its 13th Congress in Peking on October 25, focussing on the forthcoming reform of the political structure and the problems encountered in the nation's social and economic development.

Since the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) embarked on economic reform, arguments about the nature of the changes under way have continued without a respite. The article below examines one of these public controversies.

The case of Guan Guangmei

LEV DELYUSIN

The newspaper Jingji Ribao last summer published a letter by one Guan Guangmei from the city of Benxi. Two years before she had rented eight government-owned shops, causing a sensation and a spate of rumours in the city. Guan Guangmei asked the paper whether her entrepreneurial venture was a socialist or a capitalist one. The editors decided to submit the question for public discussion.

...When the enterprising and energetic Guan Guangmei took out a lease on the government-run shops in 1985, all of those outlets without exception were operating at a loss. Customers often left without finding the desired goods and profits were sometimes so low that sales personnel could not be paid.

Guan Guangmei was able to make all the shops profitable within a short time. People now shop there gladly, knowing they will find a wide choice of goods, polite service and no cheating.

The shops employ about 1,000 people. Guan Guangmei has cut the former managerial staff by half. She has also introduced a pay scheme linking wages to performance, and tightened discipline, imposing financial penalties on those guilty of infringing on it. When in one shop a salesman started a squabble with a customer, for example, Guan Guangmei fined not only the culprit himself, but also another assistant who had failed to try to avert the quarrel. Moreover, she imposed fines on the shop's manager for inadequate educational work with subordinates and on herself for poor guidance....

Since the shops have begun to show a profit, this has benefited both the state and the sales personnel, whose earnings have risen. Guan Guangmei's own income is 20 times higher than the wage of an average salesman. In short, everyone has gained. Who is dissatisfied then, and with what? What made Guan Guangmei write to the paper?

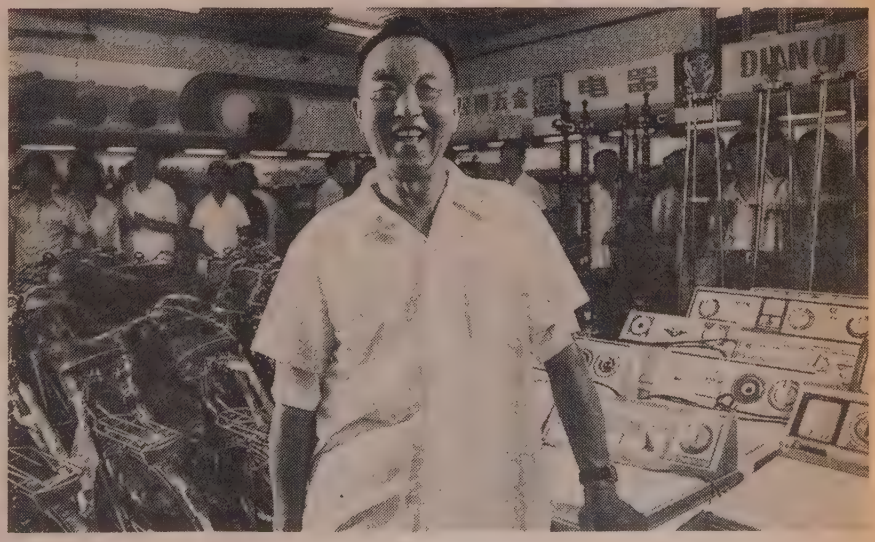
She said in her letter she could not understand why her venture, being of service to both the state and society, was branded by some as a capitalist project and why obstacles were often put in her way as if she were a bourgeois element.

The issue raised by Guan Guangmei has touched off widespread discussion in the Chinese press.

Since China embarked on the course of economic reform after the 3rd Plenary Meeting of the CPC Central Committee in December 1978, arguments about the nature of the change in progress and about whether it is leading the nation towards capitalism or socialism have continued unabated. For many years efforts were made in the P.R.C. to cultivate leftist, simplistic ideas of socialism as an egalitarian society where everybody enjoys equal benefits, regardless of the amount and quality of their contribution, where the principal form of property is public ownership, ownership by the entire state and "the whole people," and the best form of economic management is consequently the centralized planning of everything under the sun. The people were told that the only genuine work was manual labour. Attempts to make enterprises economically viable, increase their profitability and offer material incentives for higher efficiency were cut short as revisionist, bourgeois and counterrevolutionary. Many party functionaries, judging by Chinese press reports, have to this day retained leftist notions of the nature of socialism and economic methods.

The newspaper Renmin Ribao said recently that leftists in the CPC tirelessly persisted in warning that economic reform meant a return to capitalism. They are reluctant to see the success being achieved on this path, claiming that there must be no commodity-money relations under socialism and that the dominant principle must be universal egalitarianism.

The changeover to family-operated farms in the countryside, more leeway for factory managers, the contract system in industry and the trading sector, the growth of commodity-money relations, an enhanced role for market machinery, and the possibility of dramatic increases in the earnings and incomes of individuals, collectives and the populations of whole regions - all this is resented by the ultra-leftists.



Shop in Peking leased by a private entrepreneur.
Photo from U.S. News and World Report

The dispute over "the case of Guan Guangmei" has spotlighted certain features of the difficult and complex process of dismantling ideological and psychological stereotypes, which is under way in the minds of many Chinese.

Why do some of the readers who have sent in their comments to Jingji Ribao view Guan Guangmei's activities as opposed to the principles of socialism? First of all, because her income is bigger by far than the wages of an average worker. The advocates of this view refuse to take into account the fact that since becoming the manager of a trading trust, Guan Guangmei has put more time and effort into organizing and business activities than the average trading executive and shouldered huge responsibilities, which involve a measure of risk, and that the benefit to the state is incomparably greater than to her personally. Some people are angered by the boldness and resolution she has shown in slashing managerial personnel. The exasperation over that move becomes clear if one recalls that at many enterprises in China administrative staff account for up to 30 per cent of all employees.

The discussion has shown at the same time that Guan Guangmei is supported by similarly enterprising people who have hired money-losing or unprofitable enterprises from the government and made them into paying concerns, and by economists who see the lease-and-contract form of management as a reliable means of turning the economy around. They argue that Guan Guangmei's high personal earnings are only fair as society has the right to pay more to those who give it more. What is unfair, in their opinion, is the order of things whereby slothful incompetents who sometimes do harm to society enjoy the same benefits as those who work hard to augment the wealth of their socialist nation. The state and society have nothing to gain from imposing limits on the incomes of such gifted, talented, and enterprising people.

People joining in the debate to back Guan Guangmei pointed to the tenacity of fossilized ideas about ways and means of building socialist society. These dogmatic views, they believe, hinder reform and impede progress to socialism. Approving of Guan Guangmei's moves to cut back on managerial personnel, the staff at one shop wrote: "She has just 40 executives per 1,000 employees, while in our emporium there are 100 administrators for 500 salespeople. Shouldn't this situation be changed?" A letter from Hunan, where more than a fifth of all enterprises have been leased out, stressed two obstacles to the operations' success. On the one hand, there are snags set up by bureaucrats who "have begun drawing smaller salaries after losing their power" and, on the other, there is the discontent of workers who have got used to levelling in pay irrespective of performance.

Summing up the discussion, the editors of Jingji Ribao noted that in principle most of those who had taken part agreed that the reform being effected in the country was essentially socialist. The widest disagreements have been about the specific forms and methods of reform. The paper explained them in terms of the old ideas and views still having a hold. Moreover, there are people who expect too much of the reform. They would like it to proceed without a hitch and so panic and raise the alarm whenever it runs into difficulties or engenders new problems. These people are afraid of the risk involved in economic change, but this risk is inavoidable.

China, the newspaper emphasized, was currently at the initial stage of socialist development and for that reason leasing out enterprises ran counter neither to the principles nor the interests of socialism. That form of production management, which had proved its efficiency, corresponded, Jungji Ribao continued, to the development level of productive forces in the country, which was still poor and had very low labour productivity.

The leasing system helps realize the principle of making enterprises independent and financially self-supporting. The newspaper believes that in a socialist state there is no danger of such entrepreneurs as Guan Guangmei ending up as capitalists, and that her high personal income is legitimate and fair. She shows concern for the unity of interests of the "four sides": the state, the enterprise, the workers and the manager. And although she differs from the average blue- or white-collar worker as regards her position, the nature of her activities and her income level, her relations with her subordinates are not those of "master-hired worker."

The debate on "the case of Guan Guangmei," Jingji Ribao said, was very important for the socio-psychological reconstruction of party and administrative workers in China and in overcoming dogmatic and false leftist ideas of socialism and utopian views on ways of securing happiness and prosperity. China, the paper concluded, was at a crossroads, facing the choice of either stepping up and deepening the reform or halting it along with all its deficiencies and inadequacies. The latter option would mean abandoning risk, abandoning hope and, hence, abandoning the successful building of socialism.

Peking

My memory has a particular characteristic - after I've seen something I retain a general impression, but I remember one, and only one, object vividly and in all its details. It might be one tree from a whole orchard, one painting from an entire hall, one photograph from a showcase. Many years ago I went, for the first and only time, with my husband to a session of the State Duma (Council) in the Tavrichesky Palace. As I looked at the gorgeous halls I was carried back in thought to the historical past and was able clearly to picture, instead of the usual St.Petersburg mob, an assembly at Potemkin's court, a crowd of exquisitely attired noblemen and beautiful ladies in powdered wigs. My husband pointed out famous public speakers, members of the various parties, lawyers. But all of them merged into a single grey-black background. Suddenly I saw, against this background, an unusually graceful young woman in a dark-green, absolutely smooth dress which seemed to have been moulded to her figure. Notwithstanding the dark colour of her dress she seemed a kind of luminescence to radiate - there is no other way to express my impression. The light emanated from her blond hair, her bright-blue eyes, her charming smile. She seemed to have an inner radiance - that was the general impression she made on me. I asked my husband if he knew who she was. He did not, but he said that she was "probably some sort of journalist - don't you see how she is surrounded by left-wingers." Indeed, she was the centre of a very lively group. I watched her movements, her manner of speaking. Was she an actress, perhaps? No, there was no trace of coquetry in her, but rather a peculiar vitality, simplicity and boldness. We left the session and the only impression I carried away from all I'd seen was this feminine image.

How amazed I was two days later when I went to see a friend in her office and met that very woman there, in the same green dress she had worn at the Duma. Our hostess introduced us mumbling something inarticulately, as happens sometimes in such cases. I told my new acquaintance that I had seen her in the Duma. From that our talk turned to current events and I perceived that she possessed not only an external but also an inner brilliance: vivid thoughts, humour, and an almost masculine cast of mind, precise, clear, somewhat rigid. All this contrasted greatly with her utterly feminine appearance and manners.

When she rose to leave our hostess saw her out. Upon her return I asked:

"Who is that charming lady?" She laughed. "She asked the same thing about you!" she replied. "She is Alexandra Kollontai, the well-known political figure. She delivers lectures and writes - in a sense she is a colleague of yours, only she writes of serious matters: insurance for workers, the situation in Finland..."

Soon after this we met again in the same place and immediately decided to call on

"Happiness, happiness for all"

Letters from Alexandra Kollontai to Tatyana Shchepkina-Kupernik

Alexandra Kollontai in 1913.

The life and activities of Alexandra Kollontai, a revolutionary, eloquent public speaker, diplomat of Lenin's cohort, and authoress are one of the most vivid pages of the revolutionary period. New material about Kollontai, written by a close friend of hers, has now become available for publication. That friend was Tatyana Shchepkina-Kupernik, a prominent writer and translator whose friendship with Kollontai dated from before the revolution; she wrote her recollections of Alexandra Kollontai on the basis of their correspondence. By kind permission of Kollontai's heirs we are publishing passages from these memoirs.

each other. From that time our relationship developed into a friendship that is one of the most precious pages in the story of my life. Very soon I won Alexandra's sympathy and she "admitted me to her life." This life was already full of worries and complications. She lived on the same street I did, in a small, comfortably furnished flat - "like everyone else's" - went to the theatre, was frequently seen in literary circles, dressed very elegantly, and, to the unobservant, seemed to be just a contented society lady. However, all this was to conceal her real activities from the tsarist police.

* * *

In 1908, political reaction in Russia had become very strong. In connection with the events that were developing, the activities of Alexandra Kollontai had intensified to such an extent that it had become difficult to avert the attention of the police by a so-called medical lecture on the harm of corsets for pregnant women, "sewing lessons" and so forth. She was forced to go completely underground. In these conditions Alexandra held 52 meetings over a period of two months. Finally she was warned by comrades that she was now being shadowed in earnest. A brochure she had written had been seized, and it was intended to bring a court action against her on a charge of "incitement to armed uprising," which carried a sentence of penal servitude for life. Prudence dictated a timely escape abroad.

From that time on Alexandra Kollontai and I lived a new life - in letters. Indeed, letters have their own life. I was particularly convinced of this when I reread the letters we wrote to each other over several decades.

In Berlin or, rather, in the suburb of Grunewald, where she was more or less permanently domiciled, she gave her all to feverish activity.

"For the past three weeks I have not belonged to myself at all," she wrote from Berlin. "But, my dear, it seems to me that we've succeeded in rousing Europe and creating what is called 'public opinion.' The deputies to reichstags, landrats and all sorts of parliaments are adopting resolutions and arranging public meetings, signatures are being collected; and all this, if you please, has been dictated from Room 25 of a boarding-house in Bismarckplatz. The other boarders now jestingly refer to me as 'the public opinion of Europe'. But if only, if only it really did help our cause! How awful it is to think of how they are suffering there."

That is how she jokingly wrote about her activities, but only subsequently did people learn how serious it all was and what results it brought. The cause she mentions was a protest voiced by prominent public figures in Germany in connection with the arrest of State Duma deputies. Karl Liebknecht had also actively participated in organizing the protest.

Alexandra Kollontai left Russia in December 1908 and until 1917 she worked chiefly as a Party propagandist in many countries in Europe and the Americas. Her first propaganda trip was along the Rhine, and subsequently she went to Switzerland, Belgium, Paris, and so on.

Alexandra Kollontai witnessed many contrasts in her life. Nor did she have to leave elegant, fashionable Berlin in order to encounter them. Here I have a postcard from her showing a narrow, crooked little street with tall blackened houses; a street into which not a ray of sunlight penetrates, badly paved, without any suggestion of those balconies and flowers that grace the central streets of Berlin in such profusion. "Just imagine, this is Berlin," she writes. "In such flats families of low-wage workers huddle. The premises are cold and damp. Upwards of 65 thousand families live in overcrowded flats, and this in comfortable Berlin with all its amenities! At times one feels a bitter hatred for this world of contrasts!"

Here is another "page of contrasts" - a letter from Belgium.

"My propaganda wheel is turning again now. I swing like a pendulum between Brussels and Liége. Lots of impressions, pictures, images! Now an elegant five-o'clock tea in Madame Vandervilde's salon, amidst the most refined of the Belgian intelligentsia...Later the crowded, filthy blocks where coal-miners live, the horrors of poverty, struggles, despair, hope!

"I'm a bit tired after this trip - in 21 days I spoke at meetings 19 times; not so little, don't you think? Now I must sit quietly and write."

She could never manage to "sit quietly" for long. She was one of the assistants to Georgi Chicherin, who lived as a Russian émigré in Paris and was secretary of the political emigration aid bureau. Chicherin's radiant personality is remembered by many. He came from a wealthy aristocratic family, but he gave all his money to the revolutionary cause. He lived ascetically in a tiny attic room furnished with only a bed, a desk and endless books and newspapers; the only view he looked out on was a sea of Paris rooftops. He sent Alexandra Kollontai to various European countries, where she gave paid lectures, and the money thus earned was used by his emigration aid bureau.

Here is a letter from Switzerland: "For two weeks I have been busy with difficult propaganda work. I don't get enough sleep, rush from Lausanne to Zurich, from Paris to Basel. Winterthur, Davos, again Lausanne....No two nights in succession in the same place. I haven't written for such a long time because I've been busy making pacifist speeches, threatening revolution, the "red spectre," if the sovereign states were to risk a war."

Her propagandist gifts were utilized increasingly frequently by the Party. I have never seen anyone whose clearness of purpose was greater than Alexandra Kollontai's. This most feminine of women was a courageous political fighter. Of course, she had her own private life with its joys and sorrows, but she never sacrificed her cause to her private life, and if she had to choose between it and her cause she was never in doubt; there was no choice: she brushed away her private life, however great the cost, and gave herself up to the cause of the Party.

* * *

The outbreak of war was a terrible shock. An imperialist war could only evoke her indignation and anger. She was in Berlin when the war broke out, and she managed to get away with the aid of Liebknecht. "I've only just managed to escape from German captivity. I experienced and saw many terrible and painful things. I can't believe, really believe that I've escaped."

She was forced to experience not only captivity, but imprisonment as well in Sweden, where she had so recently lived a full and happy life. Here she immediately contacted left-wing socialists and started to work with them; for her pacifist articles and speeches the Swedish government had her arrested, jailed, and subsequently deported, and she was forbidden ever to enter Sweden again. She moved to Denmark, and later to Norway. Here I am involuntarily forced to resort to the trite expression that "life is stranger than fiction." But it was so with Alexandra Kollontai. To that very Sweden where she had once been imprisoned she returned fifteen years later (in 1930), and the same King who had forbidden her ever again to enter his country received her as the envoy of the Soviet Union. She went to submit her credentials, as was proper for a plenipotentiary representative of a great power, with all the ceremonial trimmings, in a gilded carriage.

* * *

In Russia the revolution had begun. It was a time too majestic to be merely mentioned in passing in a short article. I shall only say that on the very first day after the announcement of a general amnesty I wired Alexandra that I was expecting her. It happened that she had spent the last day before her escape from Russia in our house, and it was to this house that she returned after an absence of many years. I have no words to describe our emotions when at long last we met.

Now that tsarism had been overthrown, Alexandra Kollontai could openly join the struggle as a faithful disciple and associate of the great Lenin. She lived with me, and in the early days after Lenin's arrival in Petrograd my flat was the scene of a conference held by Lenin and other leaders of the Party. Alexandra and I hardly ever saw each other, so busy was she with her revolutionary efforts for the victory of Lenin's ideas and Soviet power.

There then followed a train of turbulent years when the country was divided by civil war and the intervention of foreign powers. We would lose track of each other, then find each other again. Correspondence was out of the question. But Alexandra's name was pronounced far and wide: as an associate of Lenin, then as the first ever woman member of government. Finally, Soviet power was firmly established, everything settled down - and again we took up the golden thread of our friendship.

The life and activities of Alexandra Kollontai after the revolution were open to the view of the whole world. They are already a part of our history. But I want to open the door into a world of hers that not everybody knows about.

I remember Rosa Luxemburg's letters and the deep emotional impression they made on me with all she wrote of her passionate love of nature. The tragic fate of this wonderful woman added a particular fervency to her words which made you feel how she had loved life in all its manifestations. Alexandra Kollontai was just as passionately in love with life. In one of the lettes she has written me in recent years she says:

"I have always maintained that there are three values in life - creative work, communion with near and dear ones who are in accord with you and, finally - communion with nature."

Of course, work took first place.

Here I have before me the leaves of her life. Her letters abound with descriptions and sketches. Turning over these pages, written over many decades, I still find in them the same freshness of perception, the same artistic impressions. More than anywhere else she was impressed by

"Socialism: the goal of the working-class movement." Decorative panel by Mstislav Dobuzhinsky.

Photo taken in 1921.

nature in Norway. Even when she was busy with her responsibilities as the world's first woman ambassador, she managed to find time for days of happy communion with nature.

"Christiania. It is evening, a warm summer evening. A white night. In the fjord yachts are sailing, hastening like butterflies in a fluttering line. The water of the fjord is not blue, as in the daytime, but pinkish-purple, greenish-blue. How wonderfully lovely."

Then there was Mexico. She was ambassador there directly after her tour in Norway. In Cuba the police were waiting and Alexandra Kollontai was not permitted to land. What a dangerous bolshevik she had turned out to be!

"It is almost three weeks since I've come here, to distant Mexico. The wide, deep ocean separates me from little old Europe, and somehow it is easier from here to see Russia, awakening and youthful in its striving for rebirth, than it is to see Europe in its ruin, disillusion and bitter hurt. Mexico itself is a most interesting country, full of the echoes of the ancient cultures of the Aztecs and Mayas and all atremble with eagerness to break through into the most progressive of futures."

"The other day I presented my credentials. The ceremony was arranged at the highest level, solemnly and beautifully. I was, for some reason, very nervous whilst reading my declaration (in French) before all the members of the Cabinet; the ceremony was attended by an unusually large public assembly of people (this act is conducted publicly here). But everything went very well, as was noted by the press."

Alexandra has the distinctive faculty of vividly perceiving the beauty and poetry of life, landscapes and art. However, all this is given historical colour by her mind and turned into an interesting synthesis, a phenomenon. She wrote to me during World War I:

"...You know, it seems to me that we are now living in the age of the reformation, religious wars and the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times. This is a turning point in history, a great change. The new is being created, growing and becoming stronger in the world. A historian would say: people lived in the epoch of a great war and didn't understand that it was the eve of a global historical change, that they were entering a new historical era. I have become convinced as never before of the stability of the scientific foundation of the historical school I adhere to. How much this school gives one that enables one to comprehend events and find consolation in the horizons of the future!"

These words on their own are a dramatic confirmation of her point of view.

Several years later:

"I am now avidly reading, and with great curiosity assimilating the living pages of history. The world is moving, nowhere is there any stagnation, the new life is in motion, it is progressing and establishing itself. I like either to look back, reviewing the road we have travelled, or to run ahead, to the marvellous, wonderful future in which humanity will find itself and will live, spreading its wings and saying: 'Happiness, happiness for all!'"

And a few years later again:

"How amazingly interesting it is to read history today. You see everything in a different light - it is delightful to note how, before your very eyes, people's psychology, perceptions and way of life change, how all former concepts and views are disintegrating. How the world is scathing - it is changing its skin!"

"...How small our little old Europe seems! Since this war it has begun to fade out, slowly but surely. Only Russia, our youthful country, full of vital fluids, does not conform to the general law. But the other countries...I see in the future only a waning of Europe."

"I think I've already written to you that I'm reading an American book on the history of man. It helps me to call to mind the entire lengthy road travelled by humanity from the times of the great achievements on the banks of the Nile. And you know what particularly amazes me? Why, the fact that the people of every past age thought that theirs was an exceptionally difficult time, exceptionally bloody and exceptionally full of change. Looking through history, chapter by chapter, you see that only a rare generation succeeded in living their lives without witnessing some shock or struggle. And yet humanity is advancing slowly, up to its knees in blood, but ascending the steps of history, to a more humane future; however, there are still many steps ahead of us and our achievements are as yet small in comparison with our goal: the happiness of the working people and work itself as happiness!"

From Sweden she writes about the Renaissance:

"How differently one evaluates and understands that time today. It was a time when ideas were beginning to move and a quest was on for all that was new, as the former world, the medieval world, had come up against a blank wall and was stagnating, giving freedom neither to man or ideas, nor to productive forces. What persecutions of ideas! And how courageous were the quests, the revolutionizing of ideas. And how strong was the will to defend convictions. There is much in common with our time. And it is just as difficult to achieve victory over traditions and narrow-mindedness. At that time astronomy was a science that cut through the wall of ignorance, superstition and bigotry. Those who directed their discoveries into the fields of space were more likely to be called heretics than those who attempted social reforms. Today the centre of revolutionary ideas lies in social relationships. Today obsolescent capitalism is fighting the organizers of new social and economic relationships. This struggle is being waged on another plane, but even then, in the past, the transition from one social formation to another was accompanied by wars, political intrigues and terror - anything you like. Meanwhile, time marched on.... And now statues of Giordano Bruno and Jan Hus have been erected on the squares where they were burned at the stake.

"So will it be with Lenin throughout the world!"

I have cited these excerpts from Alexandra Kollontai's letters in order to show how over many years her ideas proceeded along a true and definitevely charted path. She herself followed this path undeviatingly. She experienced exile, privations, danger - and all this without ringing phrases.... I involuntarily call to mind how we once sat in a box at the Moscow Art Theatre where they were doing a play about the Decembrist uprising. Alexandra listened attentively, and during the interval she said: "You know, this is all very fine and interesting...Only it isn't true to life. That is not the way revolutions are prepared. We, for example, never uttered long, eloquent monologues. At the most fateful moments we would say:

'The most important thing now is to get in touch with such and such a comrade....'

Or

'Take a short nap while things are quiet - this night will be a sleepless one again...'"

Alexandra Kollontai was one of those who made the revolution without bombastic phrases.

Great happiness fell to her lot: she saw her cherished dreams and the aims of her entire life come true in her country. "Happiness for all the working people and work as happiness."

John Reed Day

67 years after his death John Reed is recognized by his home town of Portland

I doubt George Shultz planned it that way on purpose, but the U.S. Secretary of State chose to fly into Moscow on the 100th birthday of John Reed.

As the journalist whose book "Ten Days That Shook the World" chronicled the Russian revolution of 1917, Reed has not exactly been beloved by government officials in his homeland. But 67 years after his death (from typhus in Moscow back in 1920) the city where this talented journalist was born has formally embraced him.

The mayor of Portland, Oregon - businessman J.E. Bud Clark - issued a Proclamation declaring the centennial of Reed's birth, October 22, "John Reed Day" in the city "in honour of a native son who blazed across the world stage for his brief 32 years, in the spirit of peace and international understanding."

This pronouncement from the city hall of Portland, where 400,000 people live, is a telling blow at anti-Sovietism.

Norman Solomon laying flowers at the memorial to John Reed, whose ashes are interred in the Kremlin wall. October 22, 1987.

Photo by V. Panov

Appropriately,it was editors and writers of a local magazine, Clinton Street Quarterly, who initiated the city's recognition of John Reed.

Having won acclaim by covering the struggle of Mexican revolutionaries led by Pancho Villa in 1913, Reed became one of America's highest-paid journalists. But not for long. When he began to denounce the first world war as "the traders' war," he suddenly had trouble finding a job in his profession. And when he became a vocal supporter of Bolshevism, the U.S. establishment pronounced an anathema upon him.

In the seven decades since then the mother country has been slow to come to terms with its not-so-favourite son buried at the Kremlin wall.

Mayor Clark's proclamation noted that as a Portland author I will lay a wreath of roses on Reed's tomb on his 100th anniversary. A few hours after I did so, Portland's residents gathered in the central square of the city "to read from his work and commemorate his centennial."

Perhaps this belated embrace from John Reed's home town will not stir America. But in our country there already are many people eager to end the cold war that Reed opposed at its inception. The Portland mayor's proclamation is not only a gesture of reconciliation with the author of "Ten Dyas That Shook the World." It also amounts to an acknowledgement that the American ideology of anti-Sovietism must give way to "the spirit of peace and international understanding" which Reed embodied.

NORMAN SOLOMON
Portland - Moscow

City of PORTLAND, OREGON

Proclamation

WHEREAS, October 22, 1987, is the centennial of the birth of John Reed, world-renowned author of 'Ten Days That Shook The World' and 'Insurgent Mexico,' and founder, with Eugene O'Neill, of the Provincetown Players, the beginning of modern American theater; and

WHEREAS, John Reed was born in Portland and lived here through high school, a native son who maintained his connection with the city throughout his years at Harvard, in New York City, and his extensive travels abroad; and

WHEREAS, John Reed is considered the 'father of modern journalism,' with books in print in many languages... major motion pictures created from his books including the Hollywood feature 'Reds' and several biographies; and

WHEREAS, John Reed is one of only two Americans buried behind the walls of the Kremlin and is considered a hero of the 1917 Russian revolution for his vivid first-person reporting of that world-shaking event; and

WHEREAS, Portland author Norman Solomon will lay a wreath of roses on Reed's tomb at high noon in Moscow this October 22, and a group of Portland writers and citizens will gather later that same day at Pioneer Courthouse Square to read from his work and commemorate his centennial;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, J. E. Bud Clark, Mayor of the City of Portland, Oregon, the 'City of Roses,' do hereby proclaim Thursday, October 22, 1987 to be

JOHN REED DAY

in Portland, an honor of a native son who blazed across the world stage for his brief 32 years, in the spirit of peace and international understanding.

J. E. Bud Clark, Mayor

"The City of Portland, Oregon, PROCLAIMS:

"whereas, October 22, 1987, is the centennial of the birth of John Reed, world-renowned author of 'Ten Days That Shook The World' and 'Insurgent Mexico,' and founder, with Eugene O'Neill, of the Provincetown Players, the beginning of modern American theater; and

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SICILY: LIFE AND FICTION, HOPES AND FEARS

VITALY IGNATENKO and

PAVEL NEGOITSA

At Rome's Fumicino Airport there is a special desk for checking in passengers to Milan. It leaves no doubt in anyone's mind that there is Milan... and everywhere else.

Everybody takes it for granted that the city deserves special honours. We were told time and again that the North has for a long time held a special place in the political and economic life of the country. While everything south of Rome is virtually another Italy.

And then there is Sicily - the island that acceded to the Kingdom of Italy in 1867.

Since then it has always been an object of special attention, and not just from Italians. But there is as yet no special desk checking in passengers to Sicily.

Crossroads of the world's winds

"Whenever we go abroad and say we come from Palermo, Sicily, we immediately feel a wall of constraint spring up. At best, our words are greeted with silence, but more often we hear 'That's where the Mafia rules!'"

The complaint came from the lips of Giuseppe Aprendi, a fireman. With his wife Rita he undertook to show us round the city in which they were both born and bred, and where their children were born and are now growing up. Giuseppe has eight brothers and sisters - all living in Palermo, and all as strong and kind as himself. From his story about himself we were able to picture a gathering of the whole family - brothers and sisters, wives, husbands and children, parents and other members of the household. All that needs to be added to the picture is the lively boisterous atmosphere that is typical of Italy, for you to understand why this feeling of togetherness, good will and readiness to come at once to each other's help are so prized in Sicily.

We took our time cruising around the city, stopping to gaze at its beautiful squares, and then strolling through the derelict historical centre which has fallen to ruin, chiefly because of lack of neglect and indifference.

Giuseppe and Rita are true patriots, and they take to heart what others think of their island and its capital. With their friends they would like to impress on the world a new image of Sicily. As members of a youth folk music company, they travel to other countries, giving performances in halls large and small, describing the history of Palermo and their island. But, of course, the folk music company Giuseppe leads cannot even begin to compete with the hundreds or perhaps thousands of films and novels that present the Mafia in a favourable light and in which Palermo is only a backdrop for scenes of bloody vendettas.

We were able to meet some of the Aprendi family's friends - enthusiasts who have taken on the job of restoring the old buildings in the Palermo ghetto. They work not only as builders and restorers, but also as guides, and keepers of the treasures in the Mirto Palace.

Like thousands of others on the island they are probably spurred on by the hope of being able to lead a decent life, without fear and guilt, perhaps the distinguishing traits of the Sicilian character and outlook.

For centuries the island has stood at the crossroads of the world's winds. At times it was even hard to tell in which direction Sicily was moving and from where the wind was blowing. That is perhaps why the ability never to lose hope and to keep hope burning in others was prized more than any gold or silver.

To this day a rare custom is preserved in Palermo: on the night of September 3rd the entire population - families complete with grandparents and children - make their way to the top of Mount Santa Rosalia. Legend has it that there, at an altitude of 500 metres above sea level, Palermo's patron saint Rosalia lived in a cave. For almost 800 years the people of the city have made the ascent of the mountain to the spot where hopes, as they firmly believe, acquire wings.

Sicilian fishermen.

Perhaps deep down in their hearts people do not believe that all their cherished dreams will come true if they climb Mount Santa Rosalia. But from that height there is a marvelous view of the entire city lying between the mountains and the sea. Looking down on it, it is hard to imagine that there can be another side to Palermo - inhuman, cruel, indifferent, where all and any hopes can be dashed forever.

"Boom" getting out of control!

For two decades now Alberto Sordi has been seen walking down the deserted highway in the film "Il Boom." Seeing the film today, it still leaves, as it did many many years ago, a feeling of grief and sorrow. At the height of the successful years of rapid postwar advance the film industry unexpectedly forecast the new troubles and dramas that would be brought by the boom. We are witnessing them today.

All the signs point to an economic boom in Italy. The papers are analyzing the unusual viability of the country's economy. It has overtaken Britain and moved into fifth place among the advanced capitalist countries. Today Italy accounts for 5 per cent of world trade. It is advancing in step with world scientific and technological progress. New technological systems, flexible technologies, industrial robots, computers - all these have determined the level of production in Italy for some time.

However, the Italian boom has aggravated long-standing problems in the country's economic and social life. Official statistics reveal that between 1980 and 1986 the number of people engaged in industry and agriculture dropped to 42 per cent of all those employed. Some of them moved to the services industry, but for the most part people have lost their right to employment. The boom has resulted in a level of unemployment unprecedented in Italy's entire postwar history - more than 3 million people have found themselves redundant. The situation is particularly desperate among young people. A million and 800,000 Italian youngsters have been unable to find even their first steady job.

Those are the figures for the whole of Italy.

The figures for the south and, in particular, Sicily paint a gloomy picture. Fifteen per cent of the island's 5 million inhabitants are completely unemployed (the average for Italy as a whole is 11 per cent). The annual per capita income is 7 million lire, as against 10 million for all of Italy. Sicily contributes just 6 per cent to the national income, but it consumes 7.3 per cent (we shall return to this figure later).

Time and again in Palermo we heard people say the economy needed shaking up. But each time these words had a different ring to them. Sometimes they sounded like little more than a slogan, as when we spoke with party functionaries; on other occasions, it was just a vague wish that might one day come true, but who would turn it into a reality and how remained unspecified, that was, if we were talking with a representative of a Rome ministry. No objective assessment of the state of affairs in Sicily today, however, is possible without taking into account some of its specific features.

...On the 10th floor of an imposing building across the street from the Port Authority we had a meeting with the president of the Sicilian Industrialists Federation, Dr Carlo Malavasi. Our first question came as no surprise to him:

"Why, when speaking of Italy's economic achievements, do you seem to leave out the south of the country, including Sicily?"

We were talking to a man about whom there was nothing indecisive. 34 years ago he arrived in Sicily from Central Italy to start a business there. Today he is at the top of the Sicilian business world.

"As you will understand," Dr Malavasi began confidently, "our problem is that of two Italies. It is rooted in the past. Sicily lacked, and still lacks today, the necessary infrastructure for economic development - the kind that exists in the North. It should be recalled that the problem of two Italies is something we have inherited. During the period of the country's national unification, capitalism already existed in the North, while feudal relations still predominated in the South. Since then repeated attempts have been made at political and government levels to draw up programmes that would reduce the wide gap between the level of economic development in the North and in the South. However, I feel compelled to state that this gap has not been narrowed; if anything it has widened. Suffice it to say that the shares of no Sicilian company are quoted on the national stock exchange. The situation remains complex."

The president stopped, glanced at the dictophone, and probably thought that he had said enough. Although the question put to him was by no means new, it was not a problem that could be summarized briefly. Even for visiting correspondents.

"Sicily's economy," Dr Malavasi went on, "cannot adapt to the pace set by the North. Italy's northern regions are integrated into the economy of the European community. The South remains a backwood. Does any way out exist? We have to overcome the psychology of remoteness. What this means in the economic plane is building a reliable transport system, and training modern executives familiar with present-day methods of management. And one other thing: the big banks and monopolies should not be afraid to take risks when major projects designed to trigger off an economic boom in the South are being drawn up."

The president smiled. Probably he believed that that is what would happen.

Island or peninsula?

One of the projects Dr Carlo Malavasi probably had in mind has aroused particular interest on the island. It envisages the construction of a permanent link between Sicily and the mainland. In Palermo it is regarded as an unattainable dream. And that is no exaggeration. For decades the problem of how to make a peninsula out of an island - a vital but almost fantastic dream - has been under discussion. Should a bridge be built over the Strait of Messina, or a tunnel dug under it?

Today there exists an almost finished blueprint for one such project. People in Palermo spoke of it with pride. If carried out, in 8-9 years' time a ferroconcrete bridge 3,330 metres long will span the strait and link Sicily with the mainland.

Twenty-six engineering and technical groups are completing work on this gigantic project. Designers and builders have proved that it can be done. However, there are sceptics as well. They are appalled by the astronomical cost. It is indeed terrific. The preparatory work alone will require trillions of lire.

That being the situation, the economists who have carefully analyzed the advantages are being listened to with attention. Their conclusions are no less awe-inspiring. They maintain that a permanent link with the mainland would greatly improve Sicily's economy by doing away with the "remoteness" complex. Once there is a bridge, road transport between

A victim of the Mafia.

the island and the rest of Italy will increase fivefold. Railway traffic along the same bridge will double. And that will mean that millions upon millions of tons of various cargoes can be delivered from the mainland to the island and in the opposite direction quickly and at lower cost.

Sociologists have also had their say. A link with the mainland would change for the better the way of life in Sicily for the better, they maintain. Twenty million people could travel to Sicily yearly from other parts of Italy. This would naturally speed up the process of raising Sicilian living standards and way of life to the levels generally accepted in the rest of Italy.

Not a moment free

The Mayor of Palermo gave us an appointment for 9.30 p.m.

We were told that he always works until late at night. Leoluca Orlando is a forty-year-old lawyer. His assistants said: "There is plenty to do in the Sicilian capital. The Mayor has not a moment free."

"Has anything special happened?" we inquired.

"Something is always happening in Palermo," came the reply.

In front of the entrance to the town hall on the old Pretoria Square was a brightly lit fountain. It hardly needs saying how lovely the creation of the Florentine sculptor Francesco Camilliani-Gucci looked. And all around the fountain there were beautiful palaces built many centuries ago by Sicilian architects and builders.

The square was full of people. We suspected however that they had not gathered there to admire the beautiful buildings. Some, we noticed, were carrying posters. And when we took a closer look we realized what had brought them. One poster read: "Our families have not seen us for four days. But we shall not return to our homes until we are given jobs!"

Later we learned that they were construction workers. A couple of years ago none of them would have thought of coming to the town hall for help. The city council had always kept its distance from the population and the facade of the wonderful building that housed the council had for the majority been a wall of indifference.

...The Mayor was busy at a meeting. We realized that our appointment would have to wait. The city council was grappling with the problem of the construction workers' demonstration. Then we heard a burst of applause for the Mayor and his colleagues from those in the square.

It had taken several hours to find a way to help the 20-30 unemployed builders. But how many years will it take all of Italy to ensure that the harsh boom in unemployment no longer affects Palermo, and all of Sicily?

"Today was indeed a busy day," Leoluca Orlando said calmly. "But so was yesterday. It was no better. But let it be that way. When I arrive at the office I always inquire whether there are people in the waiting room. As long as people can come to the town hall for help, they will not take their troubles to the Mafia..."

To tell the truth, we had not sought an interview with the Mayor to talk about the Mafia. But such are the realities of life in Palermo that, no matter what problem comes up for discussion, inevitably the presence of the Mafia in the life of the city has to be taken into account. Of course the situation in Palermo cannot be compared with the days when the Mafia assassinated the prefect General Dalla Chiesa, or in February of last year when the trial of the gangster syndicate, the biggest in Italy's history, opened.

Nevertheless, when we went with Leoluca Orlando to a restaurant to continue our conversation over a light supper, we were made aware of the grave danger even today that threatens anyone who stands in the Mafia's way. The armoured car in which we rode with the Mayor was escorted by several others carrying his bodyguards. From his student years Leoluca has stood up courageously to the Mafia. The greater his authority in the city, the greater the hatred of the Mafia. One man who nominated him for the post of Mayor has already been killed.... And so the Mayor's life hovers between applause and the danger of assassination.

...The restaurant, situated in the city's downtown, was already empty, except for the bodyguards, by the time we arrived.

"Palermo has always been treated as if it has some unknown exotic disease," the Mayor said. "Everybody tries to avoid contact with it. But in recent years we have succeeded in turning Palermo into a real Italian city. Today we are conducting a dialogue with all state and political institutions, as well as with the population of the city proper. What you witnessed in front of the town hall today is a normal affair. If the people come to us that means they trust us. Some people might find nothing unusual in that, but we had to fight to win their trust. And our casualties were high...

"I am firmly convinced that the isolation and detachment of the island from the rest of Italy provides a breeding ground for the Mafia. It takes advantage of this to penetrate the economy, politics and finances. For example, the city stands 82nd in Italy in per capita income, but fifth in consumption. So you can easily imagine the size of illegal earnings. Drugs alone bring the Mafia an income of 20 thousand billion lire a year. That tends to distort our economy.

"Many people have been drawn into the Mafia's crimes against their will.

"People's minds have been corrupted, too. Even honest, decent people will say: 'yes, the Mafia is bad, but it provides me with a job.' That is why we must find work for people. You will, of course, understand that immediate results cannot be expected, but we have made formidable plans. We shall transform Palermo, we shall return to the people the historic centre that has now become a ghetto. We shall transform the coastal strip and make it a tourist attraction. Finally, we hope that Sicily will soon become an island without cruise missiles. Millions of Italians, as you probably know, signed the demand that they should not be deployed in Comiso. I was one of the first to sign."

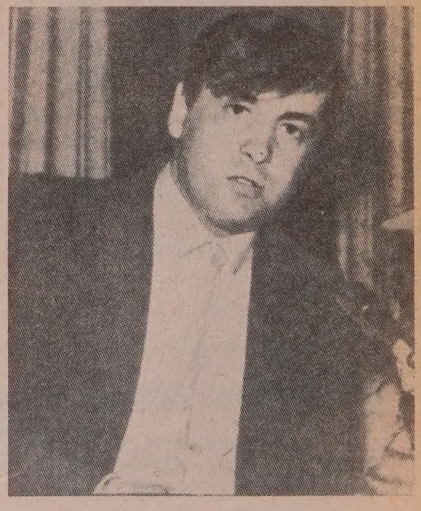
A dog named Dick

We hope Giuseppe Aprendi's family will forgive us, but no report on Sicily would be complete without mentioning the role of the Mafia in the island's history.

Many Italian economists, sociologists and journalists who wrote about Sicily in the past century believed that the Mafia would disappear if industry and construction were built up in Sicily and ignorance and illiteracy in the population eradicated....

The years passed, the island changed, good roads were built and industrial enterprises went up. Some schools are equipped with computers.... But the problem of the Mafia has not become any easier. Now hopes are pinned on another plan. "If we succeed in disrupting the ties without which the criminal organization will no longer be able to operate or bribe, if we deprive it of its source of income, then the Mafia will be in desperate straits." That is the solution to the problem as seen by Inspector of the Palermo police force Carmine Mancuso. He feels confident that the sensational trial of Mafia leaders now under way in the city, will,

Mayor Leoluca Orlando of Palermo.



although it is moving slowly, provide an opportunity for an all-out battle against the gangsters and their protectors.

But our impression was that few people share that confidence. In the newspaper Giornale di Sicilia our attention was attracted by a letter from Michele Fierotti of Palermo. It deserves to be quoted in full.

"Uncontrolled violence in the city continues to deal blows, so that probably not a single family in Palermo has not felt directly or indirectly the effects of the crime wave that continues to empty pockets, rob people, and breed other forms of violence, leaving us with a sense of fear, horror and helpless anger. We can no longer stand on the side lines and watch all this, or placate our conscience with torch-light processions, or words thrown to the wind, even the most well-intentioned promises to normalize life in our beloved city, a way of life that at present disgusts us. It is useless to seek refuge in the general principles of "guarantees" when people are deprived of such guarantees and the forces of law and order are helpless....

"There is no sense hiding behind sociological arguments when nothing is being done in reality to eradicate the causes of criminal violence, nor the more sophisticated and in some respect more dramatic forms of violence rooted in services that fail to function, in principles that mean practically nothing. An enternal revolt is swelling among the people of Palermo, and constantly erupting into such phrases as 'Things can't go on like this' and if something isn't done to deal with the emergency situation in Palermo, the consequences could be terrible and unpredictable. I have no wish to praise the Public Safety Committees that are in effect a childishly oversimplified attempt to resolve serious problems, but I feel it necessary to say that our representatives have demonstrated their readiness to intervene to prevent new forms of violence emerging. That is why we are calling on all the people to show determination and political will, to display readiness and their desire to stand up for their rights as citizens - which means the right to live in peace, not to live each day in fear. That is still possible."

We are not, of course, inclined to take a sceptical view of the intentions of the Italian authorities and public to put an end to the Mafia. But it would be unwise to minimize their task. The Mafia adapts quickly to any situation that might hold danger for it. Remember how the mayor of Palermo spoke of restoring the centre of the city? One such attempt was made back in the fifties. The government allocated 10,000 million lire for the restoration of architectural monuments. The firms that hoped to win the contracts were based in Milan, Turin and Trieste. Some did win big contracts, but they were unable to get the job done. A grim fate seemed to hang over the building firms from the North: cranes collapsed, lorries were set alight, and warehouses blown up.... And the building workers from the mainland themselves became involved in unpleasant affairs.

A few months later all the work passed into the hands of Sicilian companies - fronts for the Mafia. They took over all the government subsidies. Naturally, the money disappeared without trace, and the historic centre, as we saw, still lies in ruins.

That incident relates to the setting up of a building industry infrastructure that could shake the power of the Mafia. And now the gangster syndicate ties that the police want to smash. Looking through police archives in Palermo journalist Jean Noli found an old report by a local police officer: "The tradesman was killed outside his own home when the postman was delivering the mail. The murderer fired three shots at the tradesman, who had refused to pay his share to the godfather of his district. The shots were very loud, but both the postman and the doorman insisted that they had not heard them or seen the face of the murderer. All that was discovered was the name of murdered man's dog - Dick."

Could it happen that the present trial in Palermo of 474 members of the Mafia will eventually go down in history only in the form of thousands of pages of protocols, descriptions of the prisoners' cells, and pictures of the armoured cars surrounding the Ucciardone prison?

Or it could equally well be that the only information available to the Prosecutor will be the name of another dog - also Dick....

In school and after school

At about two o'clock it is impossible either to drive or make your way on foot past the Leonardo da Vinci school in a new district of Palermo. That is when classes end, and the children pour out of school. The younger ones rush home, the older ones take their time, and the richer ones ride off on roaring motorcycles.

A little girl from the second form was wearing a T-shirt with the legend "Follow me!" So it was only natural that we should turn to her and ask her to take us to the headmaster.

There could be no doubt that Dr Vincenzo Piscopo was a teacher - you would pick him out in a crowd without hesitation. After the introductions were over, he looked at us and we felt we were back at school - only a headmaster looked at you that way. And we could easily have been his pupils, as Dr Piscopo is probably about sixty.

"We took over the school by force," he told us, "even though we were warned that not everything had been finished. So what?" He pointed to a near-by street. "Pupils, parents and teachers - all are working to make everything ship-shape. We won't leave the children without a school. A couple of times the school was robbed - computers and radio equipment were stolen. But we have restored everything. We have put bars on the windows. We shall teach the children - do all we can. They can play the flute, and the piano and are familiar with computer techniques. We also encourage interest in Sicilian folk music and dancing. They play basketball and enjoy aerobatics. We are educating them - and I don't mean just hoping to - but giving them of our very best. Our teachers are wonderful."

An hour later, when we were leaving the school, all was quiet - there were no children in sight. The headmaster, an emotional but charming man, walked with us to the door.

"We shall try to teach our children the modern useful sciences and so forth. The only thing that troubles us is what will happen to them when they finish school. I have three sons, so I know the after school, after college, after University problems. I have good sons: a doctor, another doctor, and a geologist. But only one has a job."

We said goodbye, but from our car we could see the headmaster standing at the front door of his unfinished school. We can understand and sympathize with such people, people with simple but highly commendable objectives.

To have a finished school ready in time for the new term. Then college, then a job. A home of your own, a family. And then a life with no fears for the morrow, and one's hopes realized.

Palermo, Sicily

Photos by Gina Lollobrigida ("Sicilian fishermen") and from the magazine Cambio 16

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HE FIRST DESIGNER

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An ad designed for the Leningrad branc
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model. 1919. ● "Strolling musicians.
● A Moscow department store designe
by Alexander Rodchenko.

INTERNATIONAL CONTEST

MAN AND MANKIND

Klaus Rose (F.R.G.)

A peace march in Bonn.

Manfred Scholz (F.R.G.)

A trade union activist. Frankfort.

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